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China

CHINA TOURISM

UNIQUE LANDSCAPES OF GUIZHOU

EARTH FORESTS AND CASTLES IN TIBET

VISIT THE YELLOW RIVER AT SANMENXIA

NIGHTLIFE OF XIAMEN

231

ISSN 1025-577X

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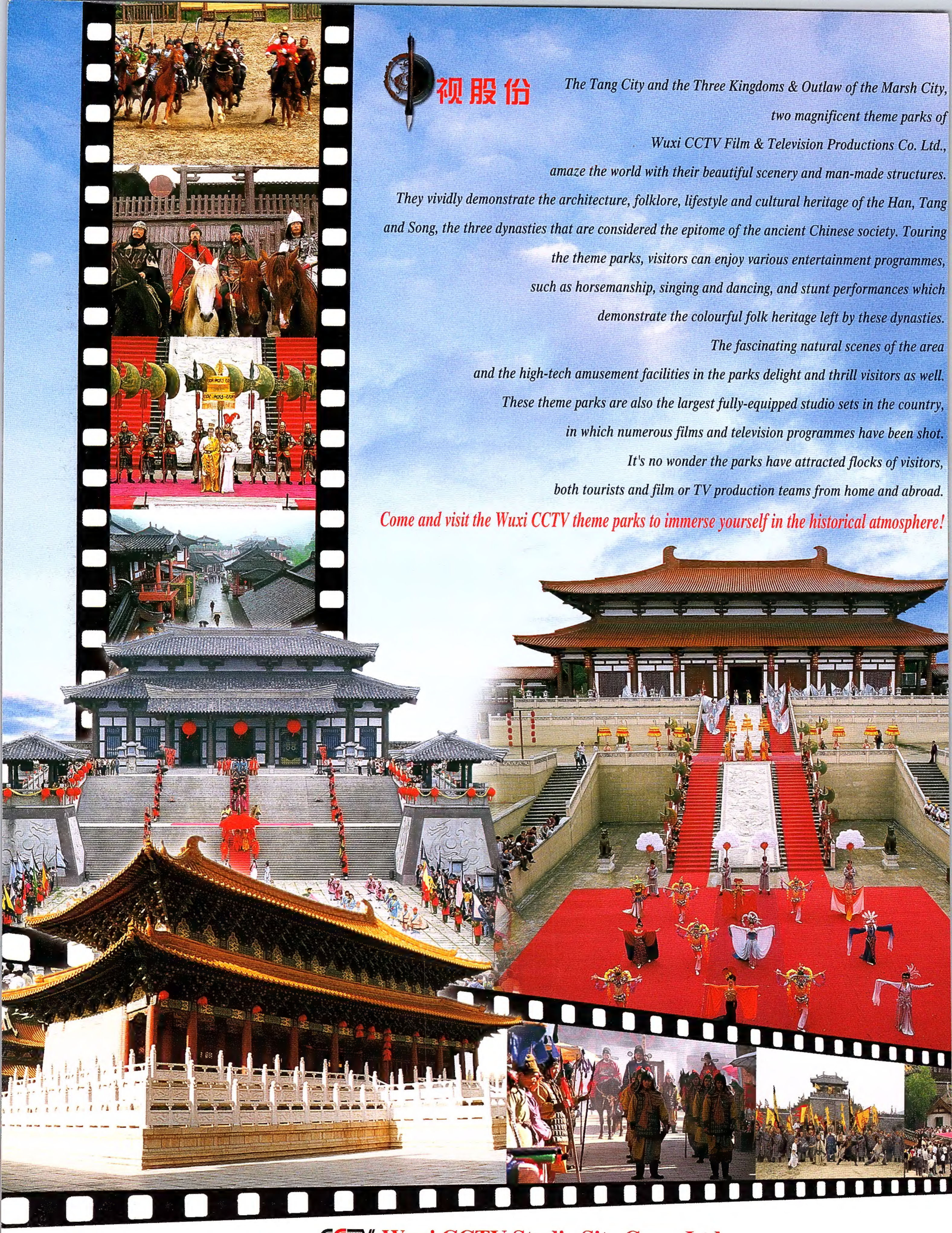

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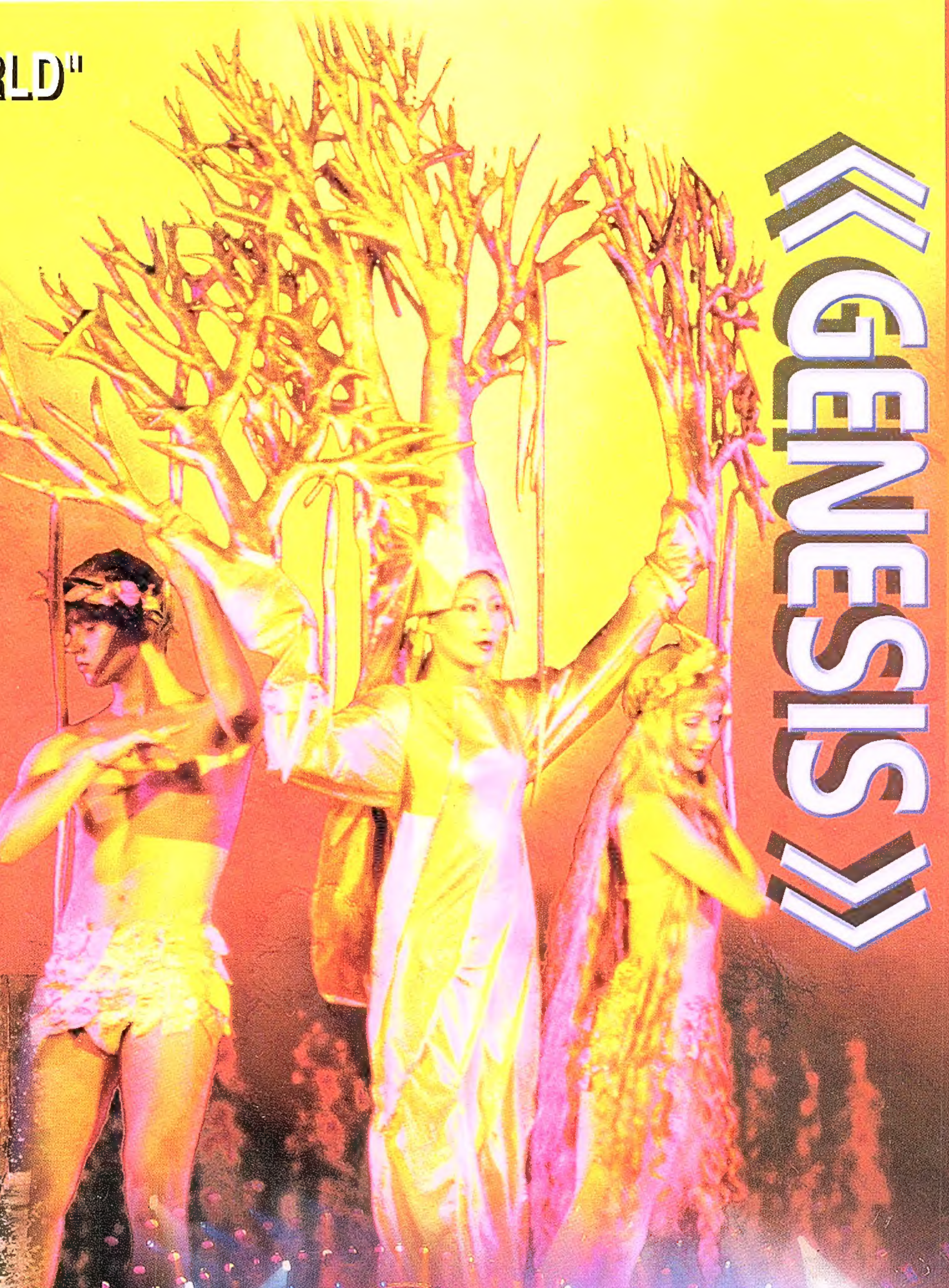

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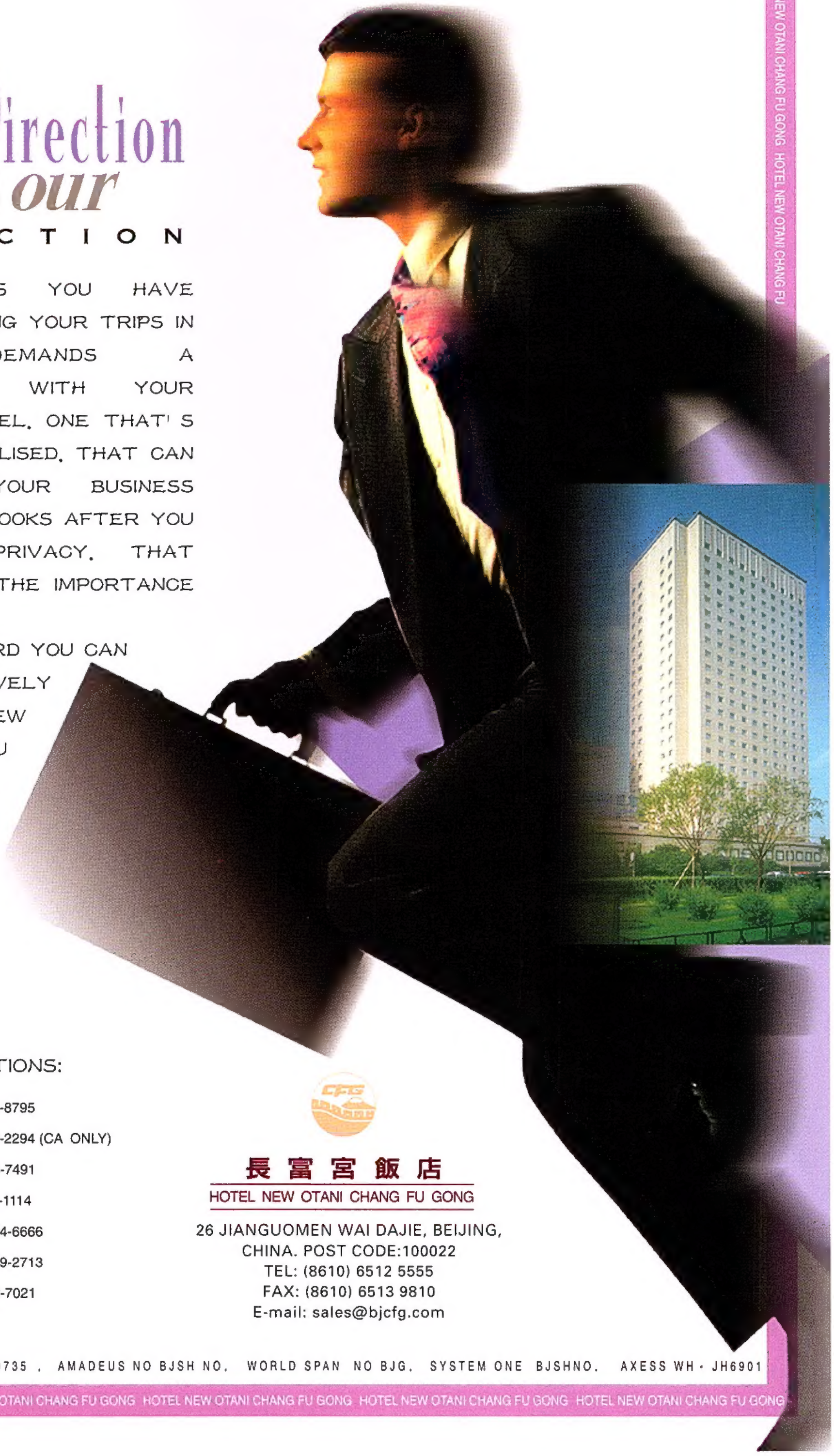

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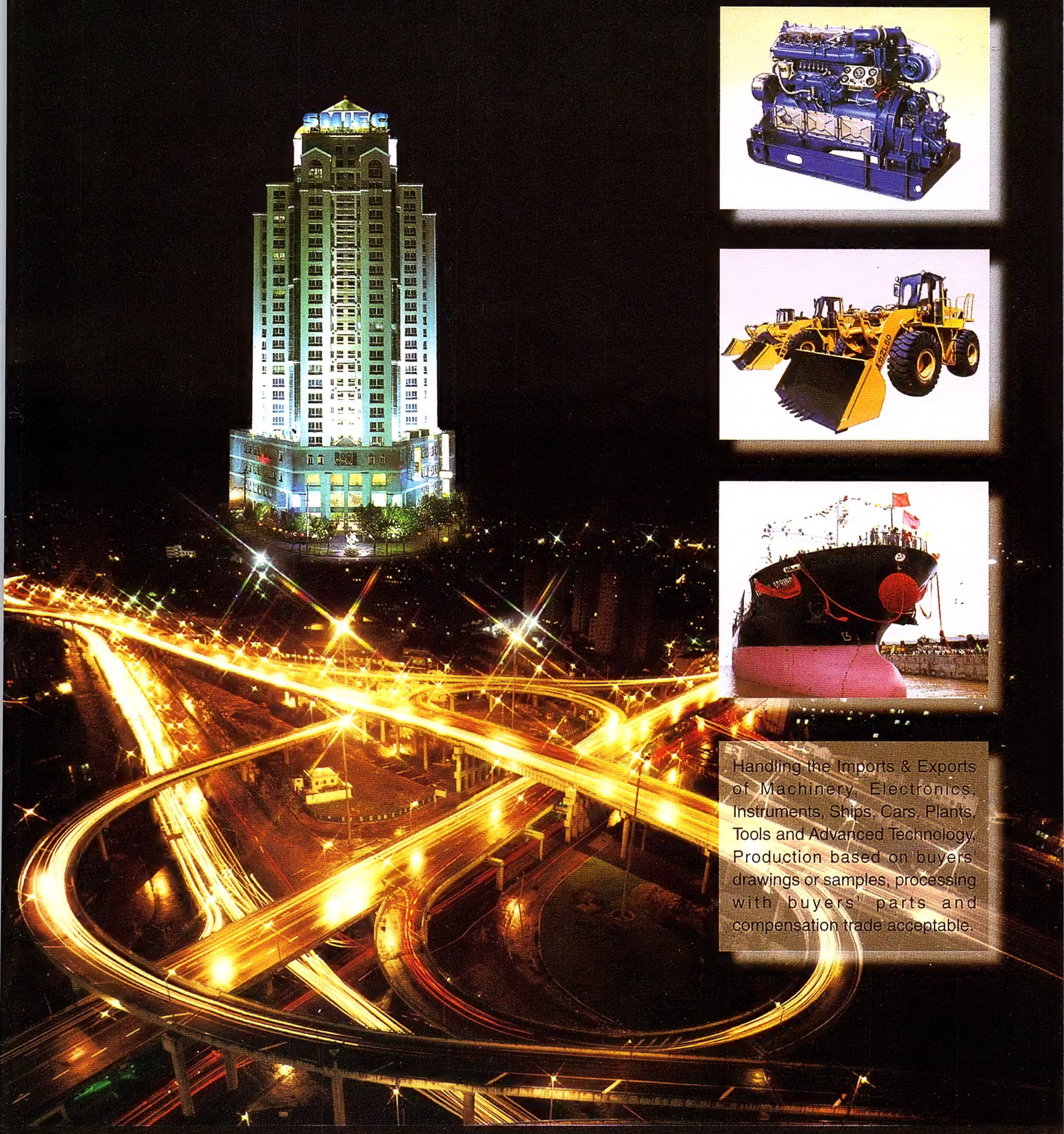

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Guizhou: A Land of Many Splendours

Photos by Li Youxiang, Zeng Xianyang, Chan Yat Nin
Article by Shi Ji, Shi Tong, Chan Yat Nin

Guizhou Province in Southwest China has many beautiful landscapes on offer. Guiyang, the provincial capital, is a City of Spring with a pleasant climate all year round. The city also has numerous sites of historical interest and plentiful parks and holiday resorts. Zunyi in the north of the province is famous for a historic event — the Zunyi Conference held there in 1935, which decided Mao Zedong's lead position in the Party and the Red Army. Not far away, there is Maotai Town where the world-famous Maotai liquor is brewed. In the Chishui area, many exotic waterfalls are found. In addition, the Sisters' Rice Festival, a colourful and unique custom of the Miao people, is also introduced.

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Earth Forests and Ancient Castles: A Great Combination

Photos & article by Guo Ji

Earth forests are part of the topography of Tibet, and are always accompanied by ancient castles. Though only ruins remain, the castles seem to have melted into the landscapes and become part of the earth forests. Together, they form a magnificent sight.

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Two Snacks of Beijing

Photos & article by Jian Hui

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Photos & article by Li Wu

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Rocks That Lay Eggs

Photos & article by Wu Min

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Sanmenxia: Yellow River, Ancient Pass and Cave Village

Photos & article by Li Zhixiong

Sanmenxia Gorge of the Yellow River, lying west of Luoyang in Henan Province, is the most perilous part of the river. At its narrowest point, the sheer cliffs on the two banks are only 250 metres apart. A visit to the city of Sanmenxia, which got its name from the gorge nearby, includes many activities: boating and rafting on the Yellow River, visiting historical sites and temples, and enjoying interesting local underground village folklore.

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China Tourism Photo Library Tel: 2561 8001
Hong Kong China Tourism Ltd. Tel: 2516 9228
Licence No. 351850
Publisher: HK CHINA TOURISM PRESS
24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong
Tel: 2561 8001 Fax: 2561 8057 2561 8196
Printer: C & C Offset Printing Co. Ltd.
C & C Building, 36 Ting Lai Road, Tai Po, N.T. Tel: 2666 4988

Agencies: Australia Gordon and Gotch Ltd., 25-37 Huntingdale Road, Burwood, Victoria 3125 • **Belgium** Sun Wah Supermarket • **Brazil** Comercio Impotdora Konmin Ltd. • **Canada** Sun Wa Bookstore, Toronto; Van China Trade Centre Ltd., Vancouver • **China** National Publications Import & Export Corp., Beijing • **England** Guanghwa Company Ltd., London • **France** Europasie S.A.R.L., Paris • **Holland** Ming Ya, Amsterdam • **Hong Kong** Foreign Press Distributors Ltd. • **Japan** Koyosha Co. Ltd., Tokyo • **Macau** Starlight Bookstore Ltd.; The World Book Company; Plaza Cultural Macau Ltd. • **Malaysia** Pustaka Lively, Tawau, Sabah • **Singapore** International Book(s) Pte. Ltd. • **Thailand** Chew Hong Service Ltd., Bangkok • **The Philippines** Good Quality Merchandising, Manila • **U.S.A.** China Periodical Distribution, Los Angeles; Oriental Culture Enterprise Co., New York; China Daily Distribution Corp., New York

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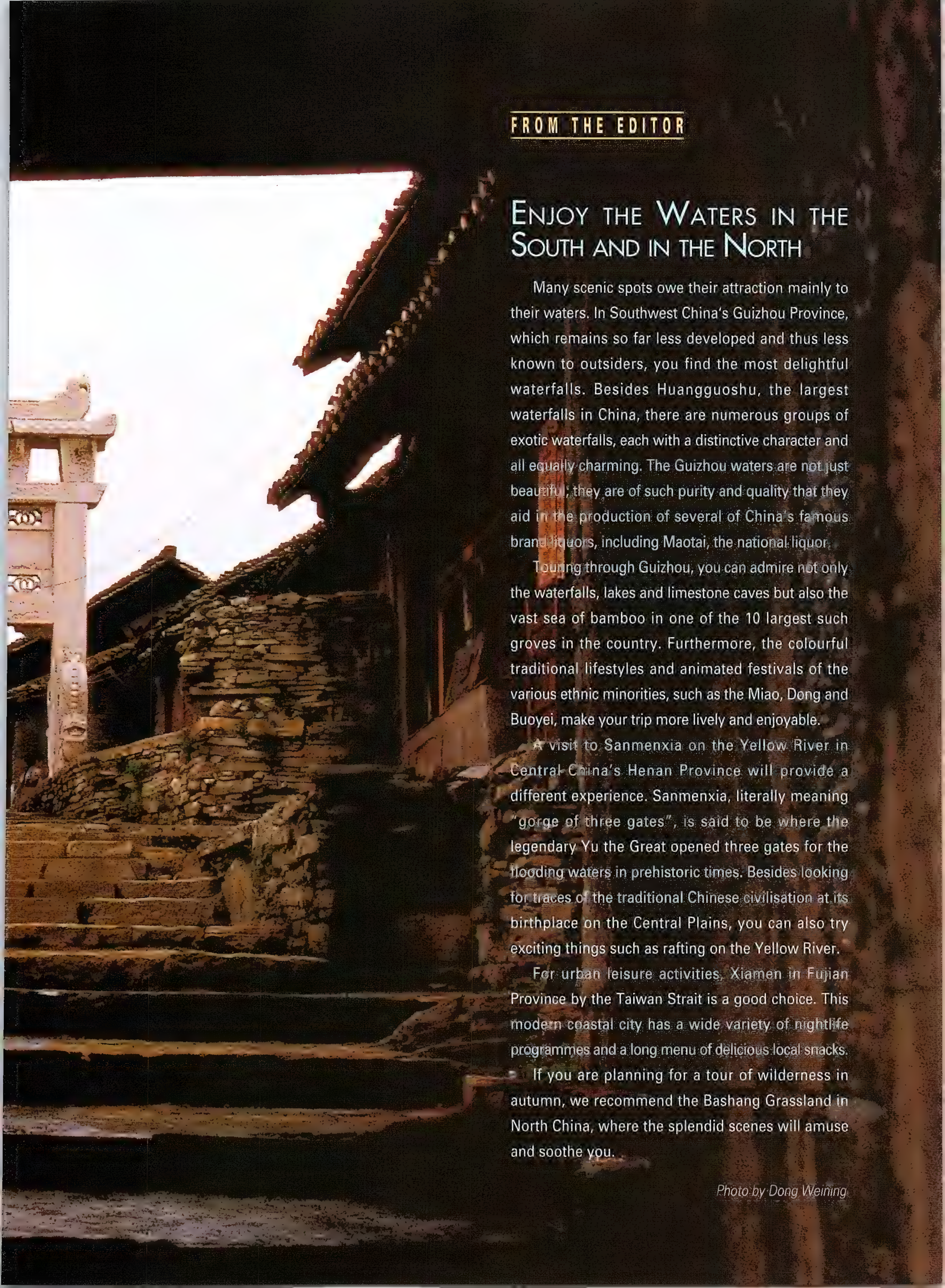


FROM THE EDITOR

ENJOY THE WATERS IN THE SOUTH AND IN THE NORTH

Many scenic spots owe their attraction mainly to their waters. In Southwest China's Guizhou Province, which remains so far less developed and thus less known to outsiders, you find the most delightful waterfalls. Besides Huangguoshu, the largest waterfalls in China, there are numerous groups of exotic waterfalls, each with a distinctive character and all equally charming. The Guizhou waters are not just beautiful; they are of such purity and quality that they aid in the production of several of China's famous brand liquors, including Maotai, the national liquor.

Touring through Guizhou, you can admire not only the waterfalls, lakes and limestone caves but also the vast sea of bamboo in one of the 10 largest such groves in the country. Furthermore, the colourful traditional lifestyles and animated festivals of the various ethnic minorities, such as the Miao, Dong and Buoyei, make your trip more lively and enjoyable.

A visit to Sanmenxia on the Yellow River in Central China's Henan Province will provide a different experience. Sanmenxia, literally meaning "gorge of three gates", is said to be where the legendary Yu the Great opened three gates for the flooding waters in prehistoric times. Besides looking for traces of the traditional Chinese civilisation at its birthplace on the Central Plains, you can also try exciting things such as rafting on the Yellow River.

For urban leisure activities, Xiamen in Fujian Province by the Taiwan Strait is a good choice. This modern coastal city has a wide variety of nightlife programmes and a long menu of delicious local snacks.

If you are planning for a tour of wilderness in autumn, we recommend the Bashang Grassland in North China, where the splendid scenes will amuse and soothe you.

Photo by Dong Weining

Grand Celebration for the Year 2000

Mount Tai: On the New Year's Day of 2000, representatives from China's 56 ethnic groups will gather on the summit of Mount Tai in East China's Shandong Province to watch the sunrise and greet the first rays of the 21st century.

Wuhan: The capital city of Central China's Hubei Province will greet the new century by creating a huge mural and a giant bell. The mural, which will be put up on top of the Turtle Hill by the Yangtse River, will depict a famous battle described in the Chinese classic novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The bell, weighing 21 tons, will be hung on the Yellow Crane Tower standing on the other side of the river.

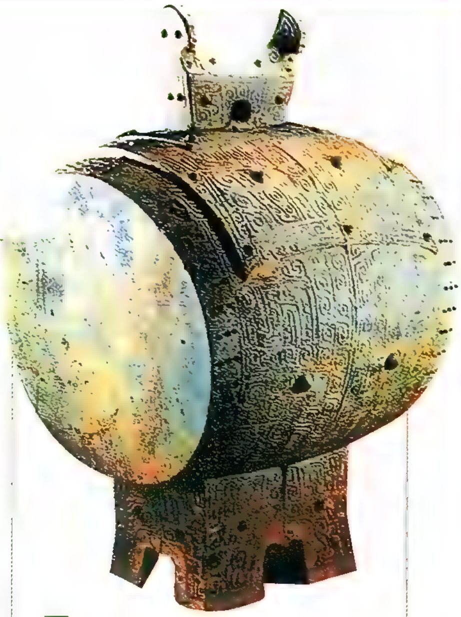
Beijing: A steel-structure of 9.3 metres high, 47 metres in diameter and weighing 3,200 tons will be built at the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution. Named Century Platform, the project will serve as a symbol of carrying the weight of history and looking forward to China's bright future. The municipality's grand celebration of the new century will be held around this platform.

Shanghai: A clock for greeting the coming 2000 has been established on Binjiang Road in Shanghai's Pudong New Development Area. Century Clock, a 5.5-metre-high structure, is made of stainless steel. While reminding people of the approach of the new century, it is also serving as a new tourist attraction.

Hanging Coffin Exhibition Hall, Sichuan

As part of the ancient Ba culture, the hanging coffins have drawn great interest from people at home and abroad. Now a special museum, the Ba People's Hanging Coffin Exhibition Hall has opened in Gongxian County, Sichuan Province. Around 300 well-preserved hanging coffins have been discovered in Gongxian County, which ranks first in the country.

Displayed in the newly constructed museum are 54 pieces of cultural relics, including hanging coffins, and 100 photos, which faithfully reflect the life and activities of the ancient Ba people. The Ba are an ancient Chinese minority living in the Southwest.



Fascinating Bronze Drum, Hubei

Among the bronze ware of the late Shang Dynasty (about 16th-11th century B.C.) unearthed in Wangjiazui, Chongyang County, Hubei Province, there is a fascinating bronze drum. Lying horizontally, it is 75.5 cm high, 49 cm long and appears as a wooden tube, with drum faces on both ends. The drum is decorated with Taotie veins. Though in every way it looks like a drum, this bronze ware is not a music instrument for play. One of the two pieces of its kind so far discovered, the bronze drum is now displayed in the Hubei Museum in Wuhan.

Xiaolangdi Water-Control Project Attracts Tourists

The Xiaolangdi Multi-Purpose Water-Control Project on the Yellow River in Henan Province has become a new scenic spot and attracts an increasing number of tourists from home and abroad. Local statistics show that in April alone, over 450,000 people took the Baima Temple-Longmen Grottoes-Xiaolangdi tour route.

The water project is located 40 kilometres north of the ancient city of Luoyang, where the famous Longmen Grottoes are situated. It is the largest water conservancy on the Yellow River, and the second largest in China, next only to the Three Gorges Project on the Yangtse River. The whole project, financed by the World Bank, is expected to be completed in 2001.

Macau: Mainland Tourists and Commemorative Coins

Official statistics show that more than 1.3 million people from the mainland of China visited Macau last year, an increase of 50 percent over the previous year. During the first two months of this year, tourists coming to Macau from the inland areas of China reached 238,000, a number double that of the same period of last year. Tourists from the mainland of China stayed four to five days in Macau while those from other regions spent only 1.4 days on the average.

The Macau Currency and Foreign Exchange Authority has issued a commemorative coin to mark Macau's return to China on December 20 this year. The face side of the coin bears the relief sculpture of a Portuguese commercial vessel and a Chinese fishing boat. On the upper right is the A-ma (Goddess of the Sea) Temple, whose site is believed to be the place the Portuguese sailors first landed in Macau several centuries ago. The reverse of the coin shows the emblem of the Municipal Council of Macau. Minted in Canada, the coin has a face value of 100 patacas (US$12.5) and 38,888 pieces are to be sold around the world. The authority plans to issue a second set of seven commemorative coins in October, with face values of 10, 5, 2, 1, 0.5, 0.2 and 0.1 patacas, which will be priced at 188 patacas (US$23.5).

Chinese Ethnic Costumes Fair

The first Chinese Ethnic Costumes Fair will be held during November 12-17, 1999 in Nanning, capital of South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Also taking place in the week will be the '99 Nanning International Folk Song Festival.

The theme of the fair will be fashion trends and ethnic culture. Exhibitions, speeches, seminars and business negotiations will be held. There will also be demonstrations of the folklore and characteristic costumes of China's various ethnic groups. The fair will become an annual event in the future.

Greener Chang'an Boulevard, Beijing

Chang'an Boulevard running through the city centre of Beijing is famous worldwide for its grandeur and the magnificent historical sites along it, such as the Tiananmen Rostrum and the Qianmen Tower. Now the Beijing municipal government is making great efforts to make this 13-kilometre-long broad avenue even more beautiful.

Besides the 200,000 square metres of lawn that has been sown along the roadsides, 280,000 trees and 600,000 flowering plants are also being planted. Furthermore, two dozen fountains will be built along the road. These fountains, which will erupt simultaneously, will not only beautify the environment but also help moisten the air which is dry most of the year.

Expedition of Taklimakan Desert

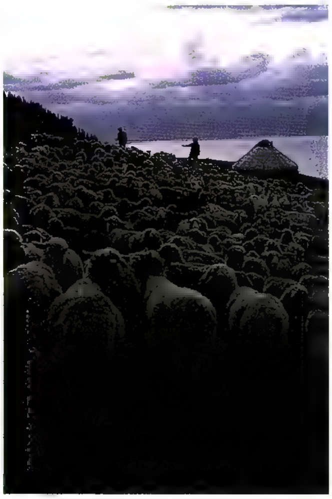
An expedition tour will be arranged for young people from China's mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Singapore and Japan who are interested in crossing the Taklimakan, the world's second largest desert. Jointly organised by the Xinjiang Youdian International Travel Service and the Zhongyi International Travel Service, the tour will start from Hotan on December 22, 1999 and end on January 8, 2000 in Aksu. The travellers will cross the desert by riding camels, driving jeeps and on foot. They will also visit scenic spots in Kuqa, Korla, Turpan and Daban in southern Xinjiang.

Wine and Sweets Fair in Dalian

A national trade fair featuring sweets and alcoholic drinks will be held from October 16 to 20 in Dalian, a coastal city in Northeast China's Liaoning Province. It will be the 61st fair of its kind ever held in China. Each of the previous sessions in recent years attracted an average of over 3,000 participating enterprises and brought in more than 10 billion yuan (US$1.21 billion) worth of business. The coming Dalian fair is co-sponsored by the China Sugar and Wine Group Co. and the Dalian municipal government.

Harbour Plaza Resort City, Hong Kong

The Harbour Plaza Resort City Hong Kong will open for business in the coming October. Located in Tin Shui Wai, a relatively undiscovered but fast growing district in the New Territories of Hong Kong, the hotel will feature 1,102 guestrooms and suites, a fitness club and a lot of other facilities catering for people from all walks of life. Besides, every room is equipped with a kitchenette and designed for a comfortable lifestyle, either for a short business trip or for a longer holiday stay.



Tourist Train from Urümqi to Alataw Shankou, Xinjiang

A double-deck tourist train running between Urümqi and Alataw Shankou, a border entry port in Xinjiang, has gone into operation. With a seating capacity of 746, the train leaves Alataw Shankou at 22:27 (Beijing Time) every day and travels 10 hours 26 minutes to reach Urümqi. The train is equipped with an electronic display screen announcing stations, time, speed, and temperature.

This is the third double-deck luxury tourist train operated by the Northern Xinjiang Railway Company. The first two are the trains from Urümqi to Kuytun and from Xi'an to Kuytun, which began services in September 1997 and October 1998 respectively.

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region will also build a border market at the Dulata Port in the western part of the region, 265 kilometres from Alma-Ata, capital of neighbouring Kazakhstan.

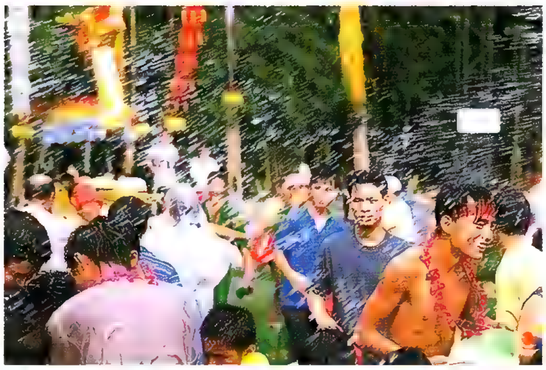
Festival

The 8th Water-Splashing Festival in China Folk Culture Villages, Shenzhen

Shenzhen The 8th Water-Splashing Festival held in China Folk Culture Villages in Shenzhen finally came to an end. This auspicious and joyous occasion of the Dai culture that lasted from July 10 to August 30 cooled down the tourists in the unbearable summer heat.

During the period of the festival, starting from 10:30 every morning, there were the rites of Buddha-Bathing in front of Daguan Tower where tourists circled the statue three times and poured holy water to bathe the Buddha and prayed for Buddha's blessings. In the area between Stone Archway and Zhuang Village, various Dai snacks like Grilled Fish with Lemongrass were served.

At 3 p.m. there was the gorgeous parade, displaying the colourful folk culture of the Dai people. From 3:30 to 4:30 was the show time at Dai Village Square. The grand ritual activities started, followed by a series of festive programmes included singing and dancing, Buddha-Bathing rites and dragon-boat competition on land. The jubilant water-splashing activity began at four. Visitors splashed water to each other with the holy water — the Buddha's "bath water". Getting drenched by this auspicious water implies a fortunate year to come.



Food

Guangzhou International Food Festival '99

Guangzhou

Eating in Guangzhou is undoubtedly an enjoyable experience. With an eating culture hundreds of years old, the city has been holding the Guangzhou International Food Festival annually to entertain its visitors.

The Guangzhou International Food Festival '99 is held from September 24 to October 4 at the city's Teem Sports Centre. Local and overseas food and beverage enterprises and related organisations take part to showcase a world of mouthwatering delicacies.

The festival features a comprehensive series of activities including the international and Chinese delicacies exhibition, cooking demonstrations, eating culture exhibition, tea culture exhibition, cooking contest, Guangzhou Food Tour '99 and "Eating in Guangzhou" Photography Contest.

Organised by the People's Government of the Guangzhou Municipality and undertaken by Guangzhou Municipal Commercial Committee and Guangzhou Municipal Tourism Bureau, Guangzhou International Food Festival has been held for 12 years since 1987.

Scenic Spot

China's Largest Air-raid Shelter Open to Public

Fuzhou Fuzhou Wushan Air-raid Shelter, the largest of its kind in China, has been transformed to an underground business and entertainment centre, and is now open to public.

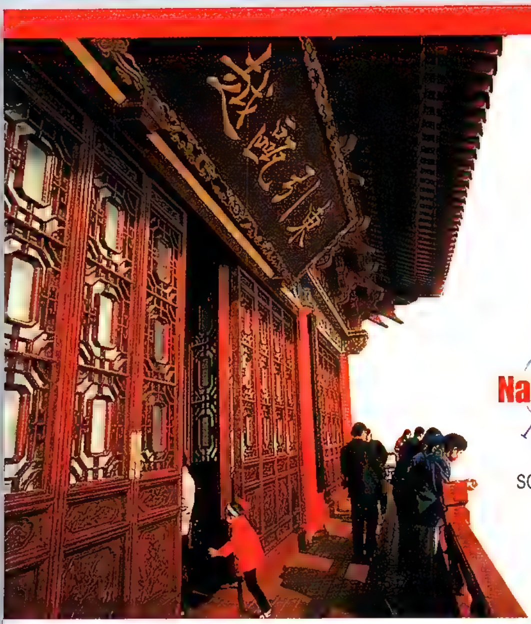
This shelter situated in the city centre of Fuzhou City was a military construction built by Fuzhou's soldiers and residents from 1955 to 1986. It is so well-concealed that its existence was not aware even to residents in the neighbourhood. The newly-completed underground entertainment centre has a total area of 50,000 square metres. A dynamic cinema has opened already, and it will be followed by an imitation shooting range and other hi-tech entertainment facilities in near future.

News

Qingcheng Mountain's New Mountain Gate

Mt. Qingcheng A new mountain gate, 37 metres tall and 59 metres wide, was recently built in Qingcheng Mountain, Sichuan Province.

In recent years, Qingcheng Mountain has greatly improved its tourist facilities. The project includes the development of the Rear Qingcheng Mountain Scenic Area, as well as the construction of some 20 scenic spots such as Laojun Pavilion, Baiyun Ten-Thousand-Buddha Temple, Shuijing Limestone Cave and Xunxian Gully, and six resort areas.



News

Nanchang Changbei International Airport Opens Before October

Nanchang Nanchang Changbei International Airport has passed the flight examination and is scheduled to open before October 1.

The new airport is located in the north suburbs of Nanchang, capital of East China's Jiangxi Province, neighbouring the Nanchang-Jiujiang Expressway. It has a runway of 2,800 metres long, which allows the take-off and landing of any jumbo civil airliners smaller than Boeing 747.

News

Huge Wooden Buddha Had 'Medicinal Bath'

Chengde After nearly three months of operation, the huge wooden Buddha in Puning Temple in Chengde, Hebei, has finished its "medicinal bath".

Puning Temple is one of the eight temples in the Chengde Summer Resort, an imperial resort of the Qing Dynasty. In the temple there is a wooden statue of Bodhisattva with 1,000 hands and 1,000 eyes. It is 23.5 metres tall and weighs 110 tons, using 120 cubic metres of timber. Cultural relics experts say this is the highest wooden Buddhist statue in the world.

Built in 1755, some of the wooden parts were moth-eaten. The experts thus carried out a "medicinal bath" to the statue. The statue was sealed in a huge plastic bag to be fumigated. Some moth-eaten wooden parts were dismantled and soaked with a mixture of boric acid, borax and sodium fluoride water, and then dried. This procedure will protect the wood from destruction by insects.

Scenic Spot

A Quaint Old Walkway in Shunde

Shunde A typical South China street of the late Qing-dynasty style has recently appeared on Huagai Road in Daliang Town, Shunde City, Guangdong. This newly-renovated walkway on the Old Fengcheng Street is aimed to bring back the prosperous years of the street and to combine sightseeing and shopping in a single area.

Built not long after the foundation of the Republic in the 1910s, the Old Fengcheng Street has been the key commercial zone of Daliang Town where all kinds of shops and eating places can be found.

The street is 635 metres long. The renovated structures have retained the South China architectural essence, such as the balcony, eaves and tile-covered roof. To highlight it with a hint of the tropics, dozens of giant coconut trees planted in the early 1950s have also been preserved. The renovated Old Fengcheng Street can be linked with the famous Qinghui Garden and Xishan Temple to create a representative scenic area of Shunde. The project should be finished before October 1.

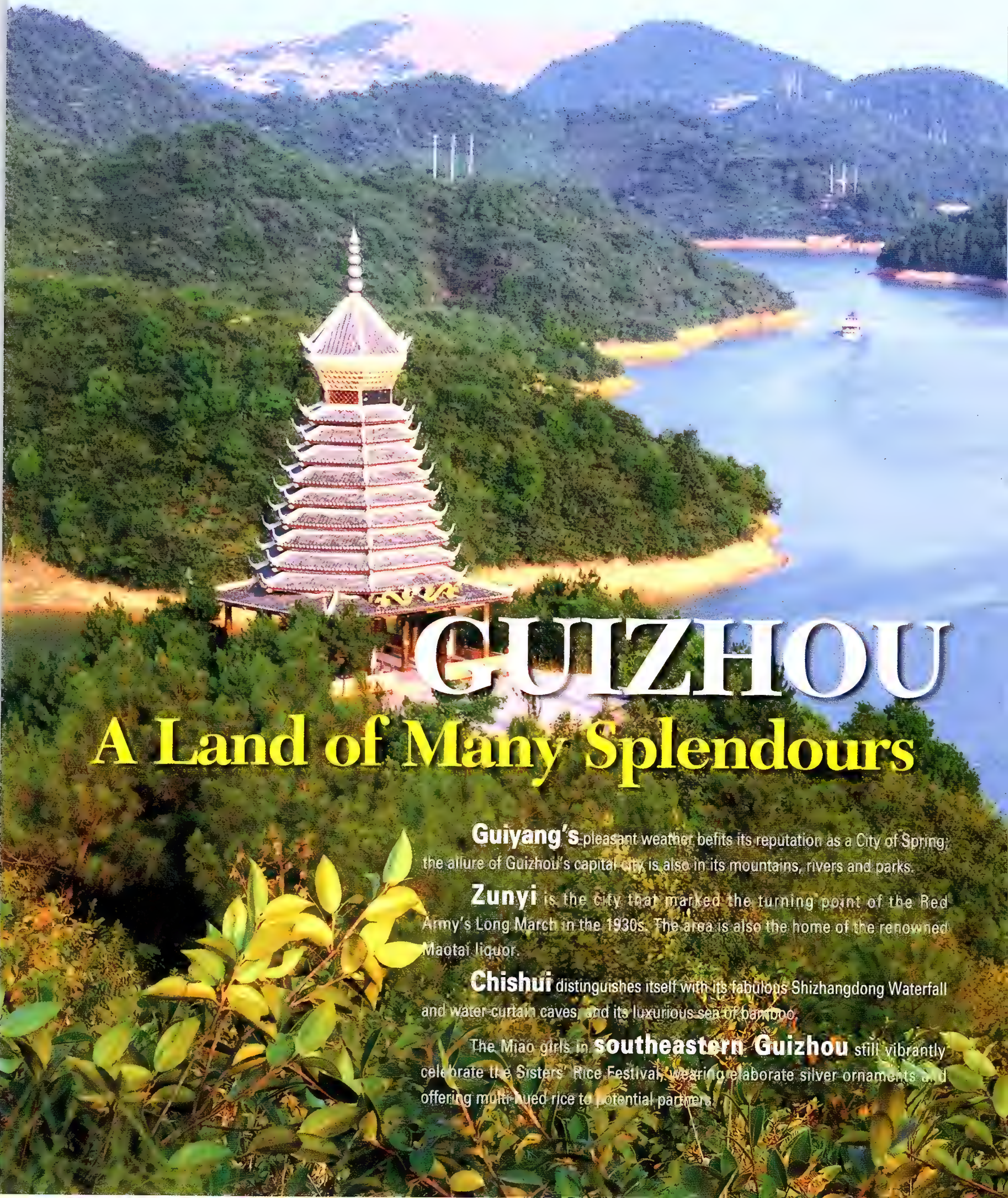
Event

The 6th China Zhengzhou International Shaolin Martial Arts Festival

Zhengzhou The 6th China Zhengzhou International Shaolin Martial Arts Festival, the last and the largest international activity in China at the end of this century involving martial arts, culture and tourism, was held successfully from September 1 to 5 in Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan Province.

Featuring martial arts, gymnastics and acrobatics, together with performances of strong local colour, the festival was a showcase of the rich cultural resources of Zhengzhou, the Yellow River region, and Shaolin Temple.

Martial arts competitions and performances took place on September 1, 2, 4 and 5. On September 3, a grand guest-welcoming activity was held in Dengfeng, the cradle of Shaolin martial arts, during which visitors joined in tours to the renowned Shaolin Temple, Pagoda Forest, Star-viewing Terrace, and other scenic spots in Songshan Mountain. Moreover, during the festival period, sports contests took place in Zhengzhou's Zijingshan Square and Bishagang Park. Domestic and overseas martial arts troupes also staged their performances in places such as Lücheng Square, Jingwei Square and People's Park.



GUIZHOU

A Land of Many Splendours

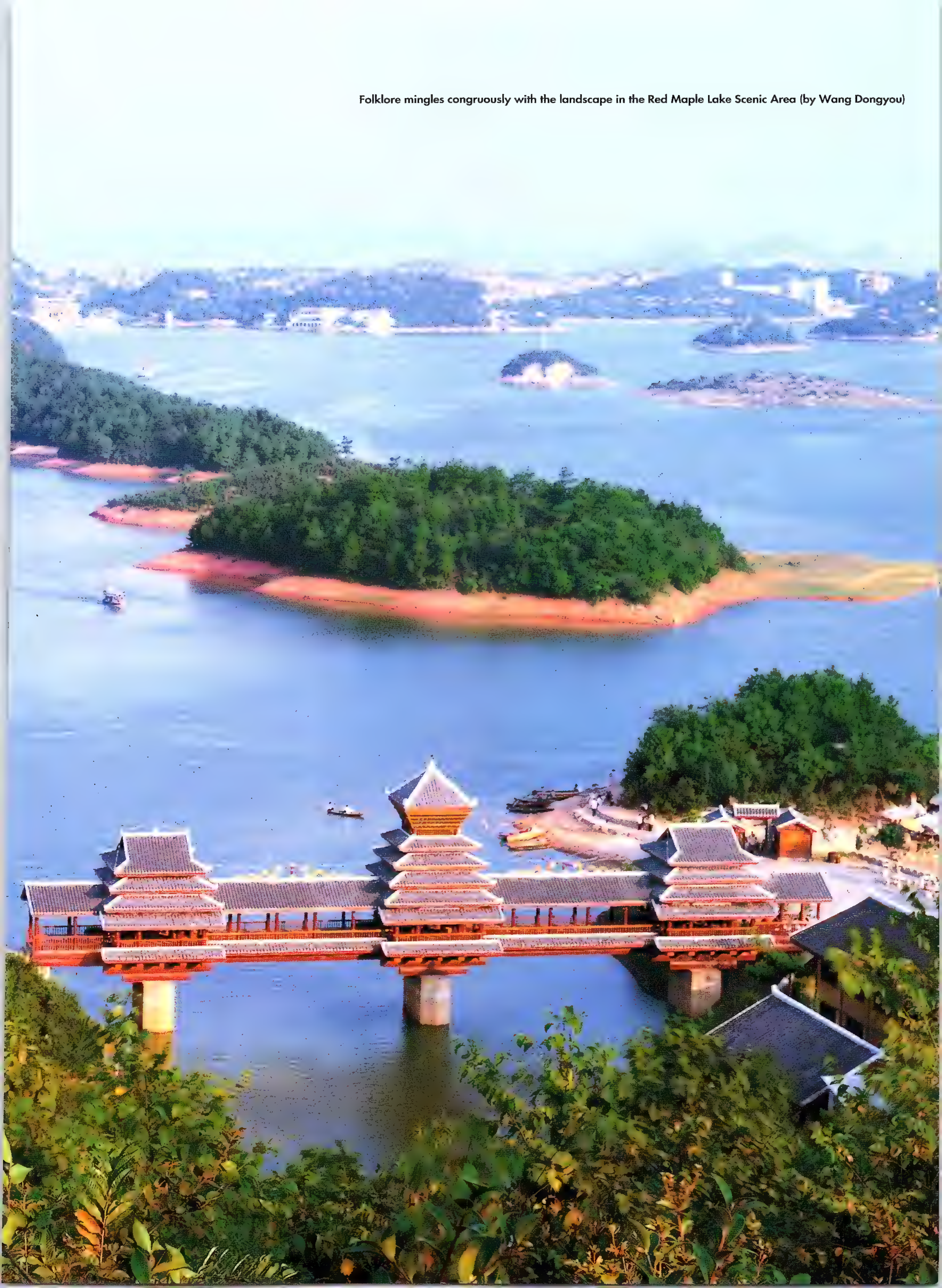
Guiyang's pleasant weather befits its reputation as a City of Spring; the allure of Guizhou's capital city is also in its mountains, rivers and parks.

Zunyi is the city that marked the turning point of the Red Army's Long March in the 1930s. The area is also the home of the renowned Maotai liquor.

Chishui distinguishes itself with its fabulous Shizhangdong Waterfall and water-curtain caves, and its luxurious sea of bamboo.

The Miao girls in **southeastern Guizhou** still vibrantly celebrate the Sisters' Rice Festival, wearing elaborate silver ornaments and offering multi-hued rice to potential partners.

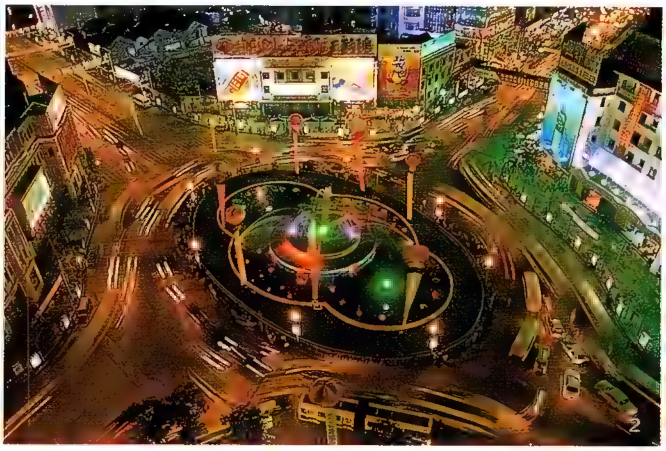
Folklore mingles congruously with the landscape in the Red Maple Lake Scenic Area (by Wang Dongyou)



GUIYANG

Spring All Year Round

Guiyang, like Kunming, is known as a City of Spring that entertains tourists in all four seasons. The city's jungle of high-rise buildings and ancient structures mingle almost imperceptibly with karst caves and limestone peaks. Natural scenic spots are everywhere. Indeed, few cities in this world have as many picture-perfect scenes and sights as Guiyang.

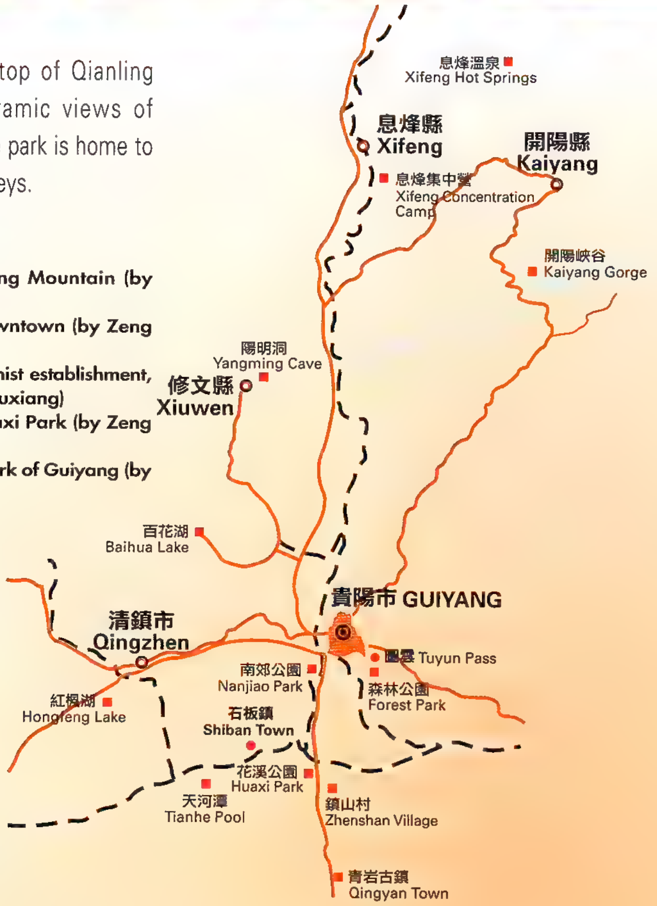


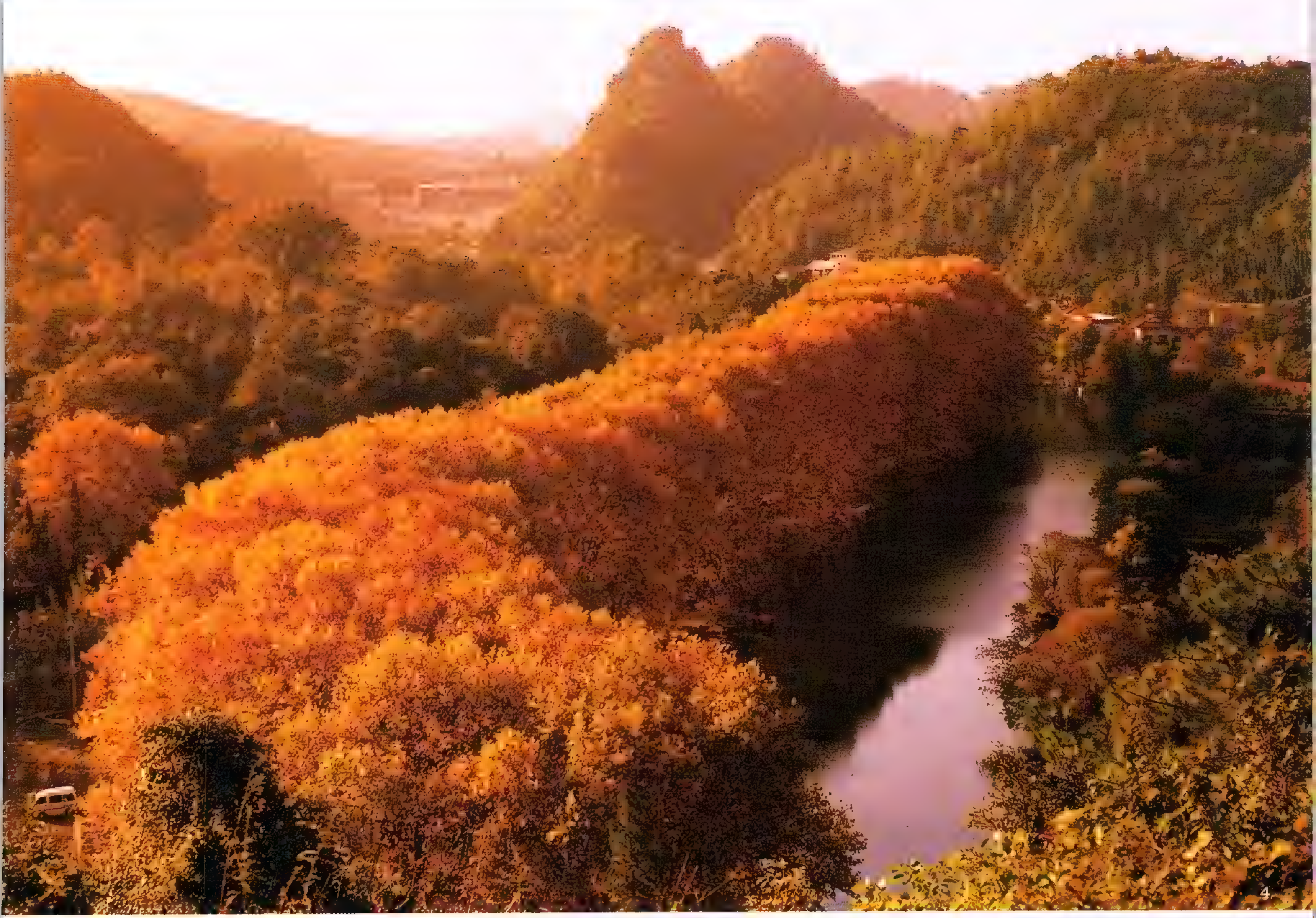
Qianling Mountain: A Backyard Garden

In Qianling Mountain Park in Guiyang's northwest corner nature mingles with man-made attractions to form six scenic parts. Qianling Lake glistens like a pearl lost in a green blur of mountains. Restaurants and teahouses by the lake offers patrons picturesque views.

Qianling Mountain is cocooned under a thick blanket of pines and cypresses. The mountain is home to quite a few endangered species under state protection, as well as valuable ornamental plants and medicinal herbs. A footpath makes 24 twists and turns to reach Hongfu Temple, Guizhou's largest Buddhist establishment, on the mountain top. The temple is laid out on a crossed-square plan, and situated on a funnel-like junction of three limestone mountains. The temple's endurance over three centuries may be because the rainfall, no matter how torrential, is always drained down the funnel. The top of Qianling Mountain offers panoramic views of Guiyang's city jungle. The park is home to more than 200 wild monkeys.

1. **Cable cars over Qianling Mountain (by Zeng Xianyang)**
2. **A circular flyover in downtown (by Zeng Xianyang)**
3. **Guizhou's premier Buddhist establishment, Hongfu Temple (by Li Youxiang)**
4. **An autumn scene at Huaxi Park (by Zeng Xianyang)**
5. **Jiaxiu Tower is a landmark of Guiyang (by Li Youxiang)**





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The Largest Urban Forest Park

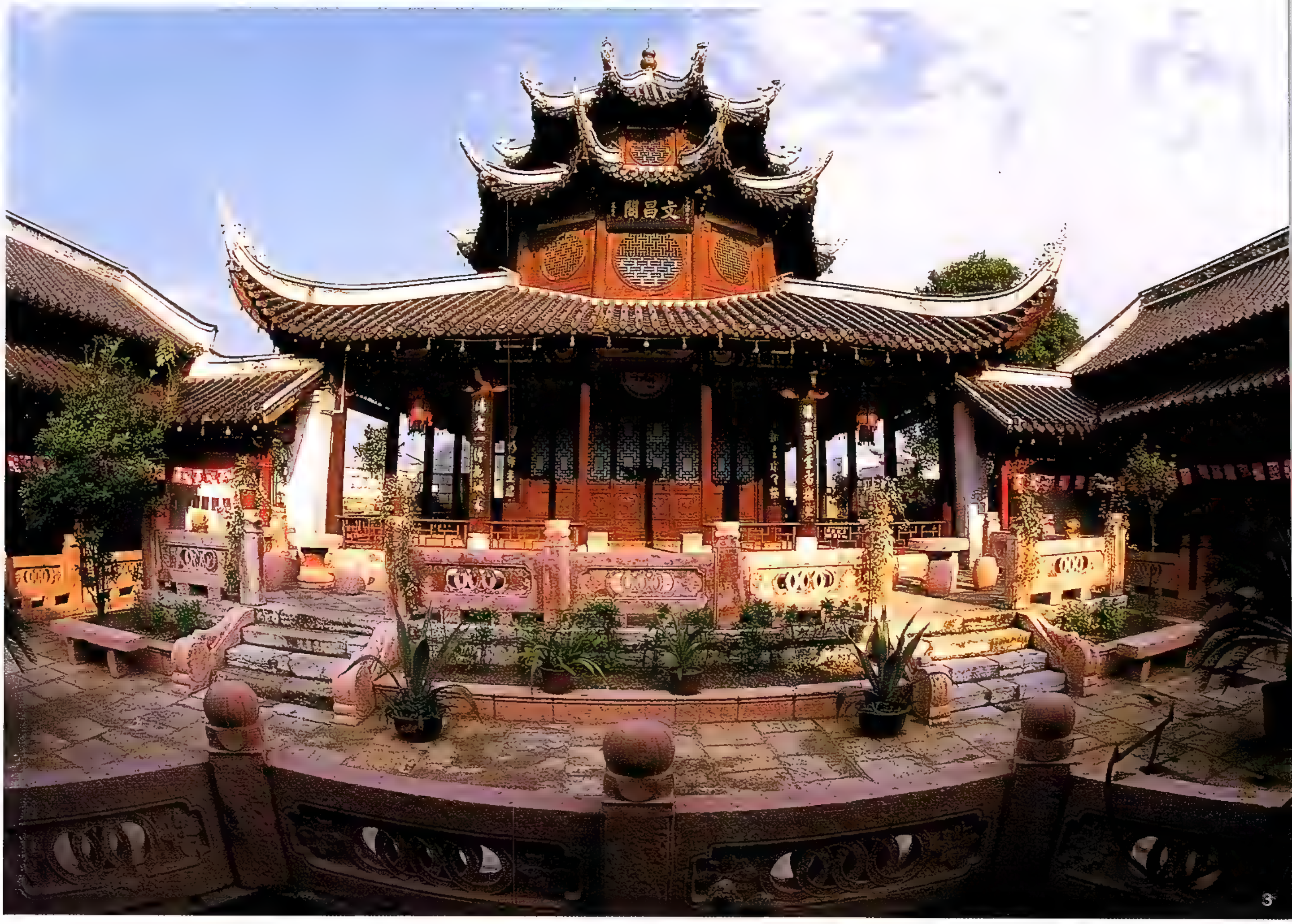
About two and a half kilometres east of Guiyang is a 3,900-hectare forest, the first and largest urban forest park in China. The presence of this huge forest is a tremendous boon to Guiyang's residents, as it works as a lung for the city, inhaling waste gas and producing much-needed oxygen. Situated at the park entrance is an ancient fort, Tuyun Pass, which was the key access to Guiyang and a bone of contention among warring strategists. In the bosom of the forest are many endangered trees under first-class state protection. The Crest Stone of Richu Peak, the park's highest point rising 1,600 metres, is ideal for watching sunrises and sunsets, and oceans of clouds.

Jiaxiu Tower and Wenchang Pavilion

There are 130 places of historical and cultural interest, mostly Qing- or Ming-dynasty buildings, in Guiyang. Jiaxiu Tower, built in 1598 of the Ming Dynasty, is a landmark of Guiyang. It is a three-storey wood-and-masonry structure under a triple-eave, hipped polygonal roof. The tower is known for its 160-character antithetical couplets about Guizhou's landscape and history by the Qing-dynasty writer Liu Yushan.

South of the city stands the Wenchang Pavilion, an ingeniously designed structure of 1609. This pagoda-like building with three floors, three eaves and nine corners,

1. **A rock in the Underground Park assumes the image of a strange animal. (by Li Youxiang)**
2. **Immortals Cave, a Taoist temple at East Mountain, Guiyang (by Zeng Xianyang)**
3. **The unique, Ming-dynasty Wenchang Pavilion (by Li Youxiang)**



is special because it flouts the Chinese tradition of building components in even numbers. The building features 18 rafters, nine corners on its top floor, 54 pillars, and 81 roof beams — all multiples of nine.

Huaxi Park: Nature's Showcase

Huaxi Park is 17 kilometres south of downtown Guiyang. Huaxi River, the park's centrepiece, arises in Guangshun, and by the time it gets to Huaxi, it becomes a five-kilometre beach that surrounds a mountain in a spectacular way.

The stretch of the river from Huaxi Bridge to Fanghe Sandbar is flanked on both sides by weeping willows and blooming flowers. The river widens considerably at Furong Sandbar, where multi-hued hibiscus contrast with the reeds surrounding it. At the reefs there, the water flows underground, then after bypassing Furong Sandbar, the river is divided into two tiers by a natural dam. Water spills over the dam to form the exquisite Taohua Beach Waterfall. Visitors can cross the river on the hundred-odd stepping stones on Taohua Beach to reach the popular Bashang Bridge.

Beyond the dam the river is so placid that it resembles a huge mirror on a tapestry of lush green, where overhanging willows on the bank almost trail in the water. In a house which used to exist on the bank the celebrated novelist Ba Jin and his wife Xiao Shan had their wedding in 1945. A new resort has been built there.

A Stone Village

Across the lake known as Minor Three Gorges stands Zhenshan Village, a settlement of just over 100 families, 89 Buoyei, 30 Miao and one Han. This seemingly mediaeval village has a wall, built of large, hewn stone blocks, with stone arches over the gates, that hugs the contours of the mountain. The houses and courtyard walls are all of small stone slabs, while the roofs are fitted with irregular pieces of slate. Almost everything in the village, from water vats and horse's troughs to the temple's statues, is made of stone.

Quite a few ethnic festivals are observed in the village, such as the Buoyei's Double Sixth Singing Festival and the Miao's Fourth Month Eighth Day Festival. The most jovial one is the Dancing Festival that falls in the first lunar month, when young people savour three days of dancing to the tunes of *lusheng* music.

Qingyan Town: a Military Post

The ancient town of Qingyan, 29 kilometres from Guiyang, dates back 600 years. A military outpost during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the town is home to nine monasteries, eight temples, three caves, two ancestral temples, a mansion, eight archways and other structures. Although many are just ruins, some remain intact, including three archways. The archway of Guangning Gate, built in memory of the 100th birthday of a man named Zhao Lilun, is exquisitely built with

4. A golf course in Guiyang (by Wang Miao)
5. A young Buoyei woman's headgear (by Ouyang Changpei)
6. Young Miao women (by Zeng Xianyang)
7. An exquisitely built archway in the ancient town of Qingyan (by Wang Miao)

four pillars, three partitions and three layers under a hipped polygonal roof. A stone lion guardian, holding a treasure, prances down each pillar. The architectural style of the former residence of Zhao Yijiong, Guizhou Province's first Number One Scholar in the highest imperial examinations, is well preserved.

Tianhe Pool: A New Scenic Area

Tianhe Pool, 24 kilometres from Guiyang, is a recently opened scenic area. It is known for its 35-metre wide, natural stone bridge standing five metres above the water. By the bridge is a cave with sheer walls that plunge 50 metres down into a tranquil water — the Tianhe Pool.

Tianhe Pool branches out into the limestone Longtan (Dragon Pool) Cave to become a subterranean river. In the past, heavy rain often caused disaster when the river overflowed; the problem was solved when a canal was built into the cave. The cave is filled with stalagmites.

Hongfeng Lake: Galaxy of Isles

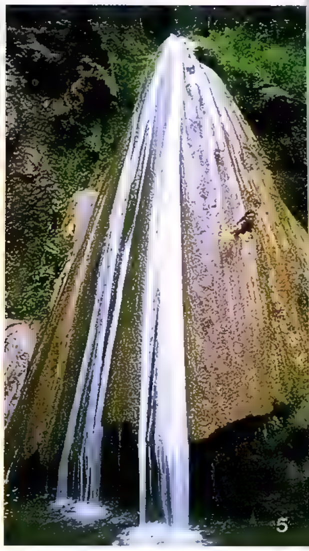
It is a little over 20 minutes' drive from downtown to Hongfeng (Red Maple) Lake, whose surface is studded with more than 170 isles. A karst stone forest divides it into the South and North lakes, where limestone caves mingle harmoniously with the mirror-like water. The North Lake, resembling a vast expanse of liquid silver, has numerous isles arranged like a string of pearls. The South Lake is known for its numerous quiet bays. Of all its beautiful bays, General's Bay is best known for its rich collection of exotic limestone caves. General's Cave is a gallery of stalactites and lights work magic on the varying shapes, rendering them an otherworldly look. Ethnic Culture Villages have been built on the lakeside slopes. The Miao have their typical stilted houses with balustrades. The Buoyei villages exude an air of sanctity and settled peace in their flagged streets and lanes, stone homes, winding corridors and waterwheels that turn lazily. A 20-metre-high Dong drum tower in the Dong Village provides a panoramic view of North Lake.

Many festivals are celebrated in these villages, including the Miao and Dong New Years, the Miaos' Sisters' Rice Festival, and the Tongs' and Buoyeis' Tasting New Grains Festivals. In the villages, the Miaos treat their guests with fish cooked in sour soup, and the Dongs offer salted fish, buttered tea and white chicken, as well as barbecued meat.

Baihua Lake: A Quiet World

Baihua (Hundred-flower) Lake, 22 kilometres from downtown Guiyang, has deep and quiet bays, crystal clear water and lushly wooded hills around it. Water runs right into caves on the lake's 100-odd isles, which

1. Rafting on the Nanjiang River (by Li Youxiang)
2. Miao guides in the Red Maple Lake Scenic Area (by Li Youxiang)



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are ideal habitats for egrets and wild ducks.

Rafting in Kaiyang Gorge

Kaiyang Gorge, 54 kilometres from Guiyang, is an ecotour resort. The gorge, over 40 kilometres long and up to 320 metres deep, has an 18-kilometre stretch open to tourists. It appeals to daredevils who raft the Nanjiang River's turbulent rapids, nature lovers, and others who enjoy the water amusement park. There are also other activities, such as singing and dancing parties, cliff climbing and diving. Local restaurants serve indigenous Yi-style food.

Translated by Ling Yuan

3. **The limestone cave at Xifeng known as "Draft Dodgers' Cave" (by Zeng Xianyang)**
4. **The Kuomintang's prison for "political criminals" used 60 to 70 years ago (by Li Youxiang)**
5. **A hollow stone pillar in the Kaiyang Gorge (by Li Youxiang)**
6. **Hongfeng Lake at dusk (by Peng Bangqing)**
7. **Tianhe Pool Park (by Zeng Xianyang)**
8. **Looking through the centre of the flyover (by Li Youxiang)**

Tips for the Traveller

Coming to Guiyang

There are regularly scheduled flights to Guiyang from major cities in the north, east and south of China and from Chengdu in the southwest.

There are rail connections to Guiyang from [illegible] in the east, Chongqing in the north, [illegible] in the southwest and Guangxi in the south.

Transportation in Guizhou

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

[illegible]

Lodging

[illegible]

Additional Note: [illegible]

GUIYANG DELICACIES

Sour, Spicy and Tingling Sensations

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3

Few dishes in Guiyang do not offer a sour, spicy or tingling sensation. Invariably, sauces that involve these three tastes have become favourable gifts from Guiyang. Small wonder there is a saying that no dish can please the palate of a Guiyang native if it is not sour, spicy and tingling.

Love for Spicy Food

The sour taste of Guizhou's food is not like the vinegar taste of Shanxi Province for it is always tinged with an unmistakable fragrance, and its tingling sensation never goes to the extremes of some Sichuan dishes.

As to spiciness, Guizhou's food is indeed spicy, and even more so than Sichuan, Yunnan, Jiangxi and Hunan dishes. The people of Guizhou have been so tempered by their indigenous food that no amount of spiciness instills fear in them. For those who love spicy food, a visit to Guiyang's eateries should be an entertaining time.

Changwang Noodles

Changwang Noodles are everyday fare for Guiyang's residents. Pig intestines and blood sausage are the main additions to these famous noodles. The key to the success of this dish is in the processing. The intestines are put in an earthenware pot in a soup laced with seasonings such as prickly ash, aniseed, ginger and spring onion, and stewed for two hours over a low fire before being sliced. Pig blood sausage is added to the soup together with green pea shoots before cooked noodles fill up oversized porcelain bowls with blue patterns. The inviting concoction with bright red chili oil is really tasteful.

Lovers' Bean Curd

A food with a romantic name, it is a favourite among young people. It is not uncommon to see a man on a street corner popping this fragrant bean curd into the mouth of his date. The bean curd, which is grilled golden over a fire, is cut open and filled with chili, scallion, ginger and garlic. Then it is sprinkled with

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sesame oil, soy sauce, vinegar and sugar, and eaten while it is hot. The bean curd is sour, spicy, tingling, refreshing, smooth and fragrant — indeed, all the elements love should contain.

Silky Baby

Silky Baby is another common snack which at first sight looks like an infant in swaddling. The swaddling is in reality a thin pancake, which is used to wrap up sliced radish, kelp and deep-fried soybeans. It is also known as the "vegetarian's spring roll". Local people enjoy it laced with a chili sauce.

Salty and Sour Sliced Eel

Guizhou's mountain people, such as the Miaos, Dongs and Buoyeis, are fond of a salty, sour pickled vegetable eaten as a side dish. When sliced eel is stir fried with this kind of pickle, it makes a dish with an exceptionally good flavour.

1. **Noodles cooked with pig's intestine (by Youxiang)**
2. **Silky Baby (by Dong Weining)**
3. **Grilled potato cake (by Chan Yat Nin)**
4. **Fish stewed with pickled vegetable in Kaili (by Youxiang)**
5. **The Jiaxiuyuan Restaurant decorated like a limestone Cave (by Youxiang)**
6. **Buoyei Mountain Villa, Zhenshan Village (by Wang Miao)**
7. **Waitresses of Buoyei Mountain Villa toasting their guests (by Wang Miao)**
8. **Tasting the real local snacks at a street eatery (by Chan Yat Nin)**
9. **Deep-fried smelly bean curd, one yuan a piece (by Chan Yat Nin)**

Huajiang Dog Meat

Dog meat is a perennial delicacy in many places in China, but it is most loved for its warming effect on the body in winter. Guiyang's Huajiang dog meat, however, is served all year round. Piping hot soup with ginger, scallion, pepper and coriander seasoning is poured over the meat. Dipping the meat into a chili gravy before eating guarantees a well-rounded taste — spicy, tingling and fragrant.

Aside from the ones mentioned here, the streets of Guiyang are filled with countless other delicacies. These include stewed dried bean curd, paper-wrapped chicken, bean noodles and noodles with mutton. They are all different in taste, and their exotic names are riddles that call for the wildest imagination.

Translated by Ling Yuan

Places for Eating Guiyang Delicacies

9

[illegible] Garden Restaurant: Changwang Noodles 3 yuan; Silky Baby 3 yuan; Lovers' Bean Curd 12 yuan; Dog meat stewed in pickled vegetable 48 yuan; mutton noodles [illegible] yuan; paper-wrapped chicken 28 yuan; stewed dried bean curd 8 yuan. Address: 2 [illegible] Road, Guiyang. Tel: [illegible]

Authentic Guiyang delicacies are also available at Buoyei Mountain Villa in Zhenshan Village. Tel: [illegible] Jiaxiuyuan Restaurant in downtown.

Exotic Stones of Guiyang

Photos by Zeng Xianyang Article by Hu Xiande, Li Juxiao

Rock, a fundamental feature of this globe, can be found everywhere. Yet for geological reasons stones can be worlds apart from each other. The earth's crest in Guizhou, being especially old and having experienced so many geological events, has yielded many valuable ones.

Stone lovers in this country speak highly of the variety and high grade of Guizhou's stones. Some can only be found in Guizhou. Though produced from similar rock, the stones found here are the finest. More than one third of the stones in the collection of the National Geology Museum of China come from Guizhou. Following is an introduction to a few of them.

Keichousaurus Fossil

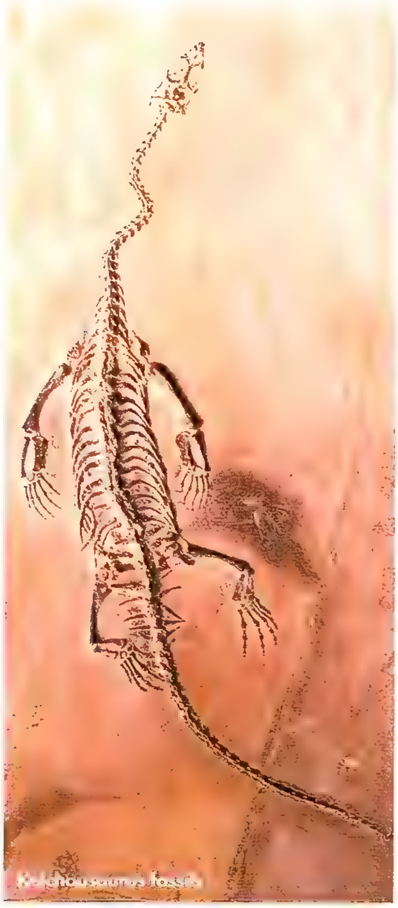
Keichousaurus was a kind of marine reptile, and its fossils are found in marble, caleic siltstone and marble siltstone in the upper-middle layer of the Triassic System in Guizhou. This smallest of dinosaurs, rarely found, shows four primitive limbs that had not yet evolved into fins.

Crinoidea

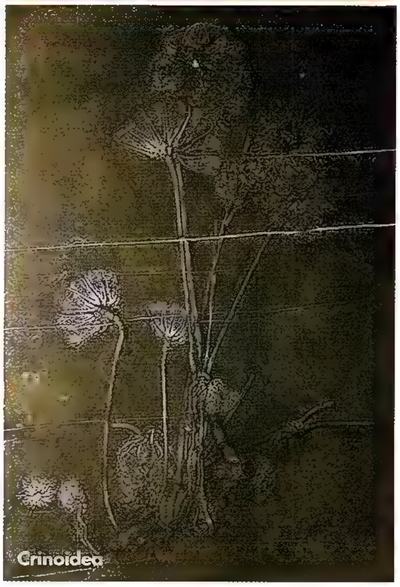
A marine plant that belonged to the Echiodermaha family, it resembled the lily flower. Its complicated structure had a root, a stalk and a crown divided into sepal and carpus, all mixed with calcified bone. Crinoidea first appeared during the Ordovician Period, and reached its heyday during the Carboniferous Period. Besides its scientific value, Crinoidea is also of highly ornamental value.

Sinoeugnathus

This is a kind of Osteichthyes that is produced in the gulf bed of the Triassic System. It is a rare fish species so far found today.



Keichousaurus fossils



Crinoidea

Cinabar

Produced in a low-temperature liquid-mineral bed as well as in volcanic hot-spring sediments, this was the earliest mineral to capture the fancy of collectors. It has remained a collector's favourite ever since.

Stibnite

This crystal with a dark blue surface that was produced in hot-liquid ore veins is abundant in Guizhou. Its fine shape makes it a collectors' favourite.

Realgar

A standard mineral that coexists with calcite and orpiment to form clustered crystals, this is a variety that sells briskly.

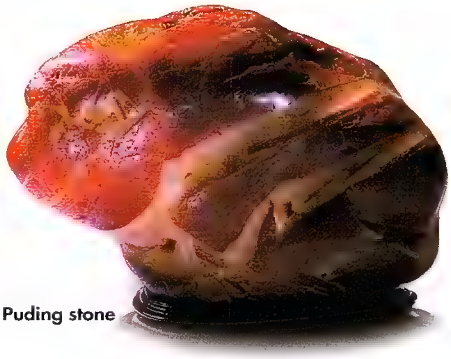
Orpiment

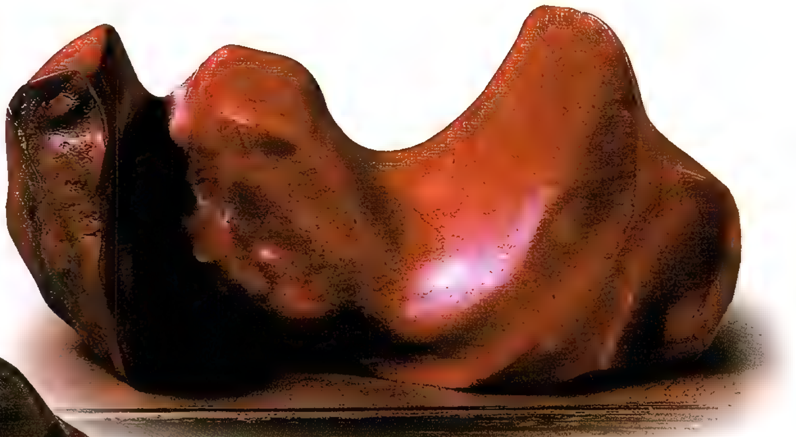
When interspersed with red orpiment and calcite, this transparent or semi-transparent mineral with a diamond-like sheen in the colour of lemon is loved for its high ornamental value.

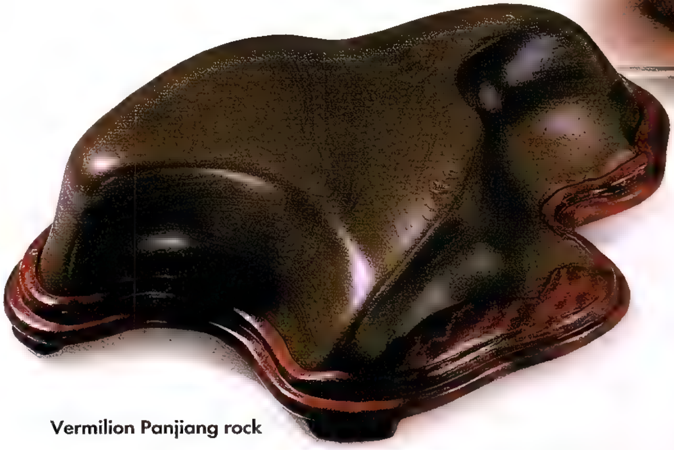
Fluorite and Calcite

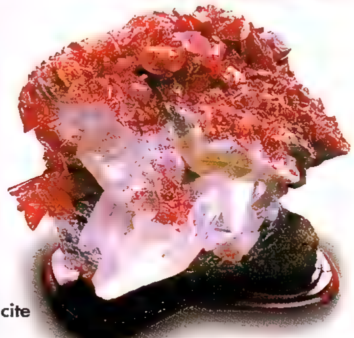
These occur in a rich variety of crystals of different colours. Guizhou also has impressive reserves in deposits of gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, tungsten as well as zinc, bismuth and palladium. European collectors have shown a keen interest in Guizhou's mineral crystals. Guizhou's rivers abound in stones of fine texture, beautiful colours and natural shapes. Among the most famous are the green stone of the Qingshui River, the red stone of the Hongshui River, the dark stone of the Beipan and Nanpan rivers, the silicon-type gravel of the Wujiang, the veined stone of the Jinjiang, and the seven-hued stone of the Sancha River.

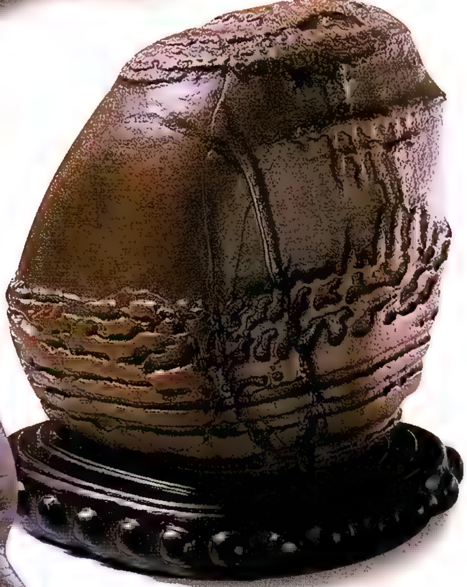
Translated by Ling Yuan

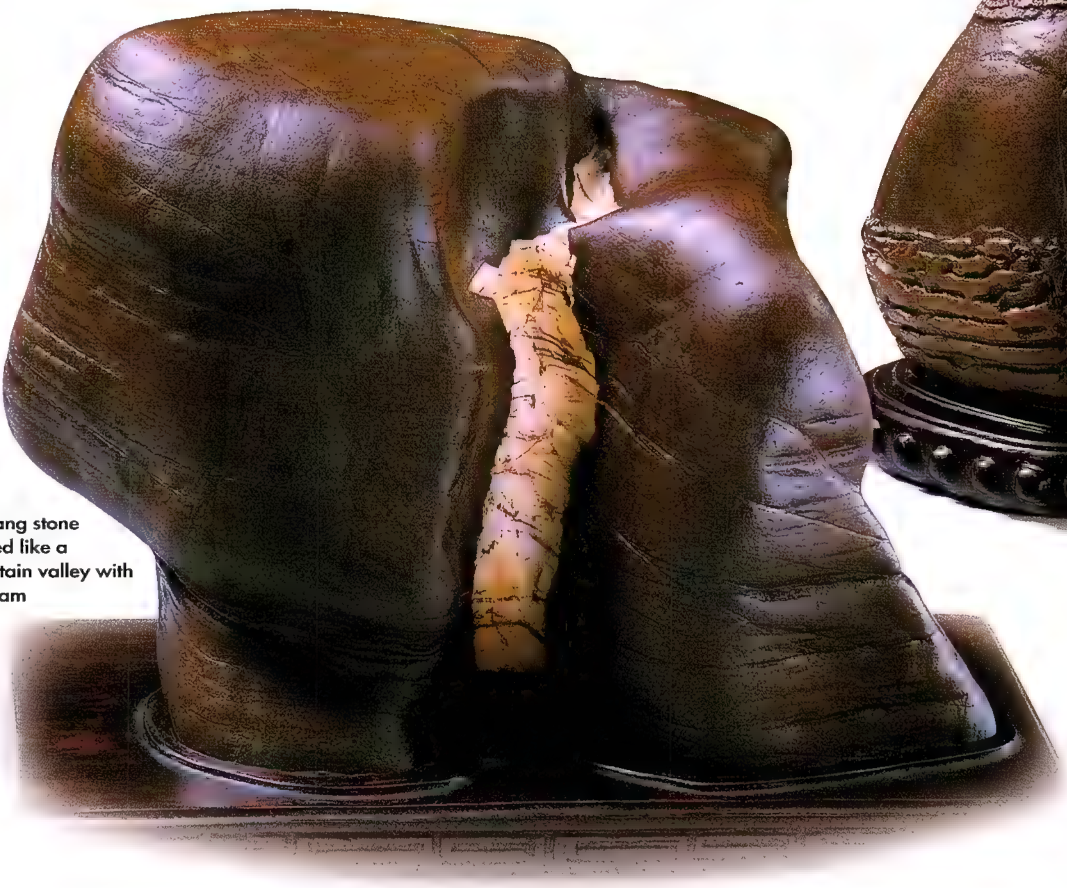

Puding stone


Red Panjiang rock


Vermilion Panjiang rock


Red orpiment and calcite


Hongshui stone with exotic patterns


Panjiang stone shaped like a mountain valley with a stream

Miao Sisters' Rice Festival

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

Countless festivals are celebrated among the ethnic minorities in Guizhou Province. The Miao people of different branches all have their own festivals, but love is a common theme. The most romantic is perhaps the Sisters' Rice Festival celebrated by the Miaos living along the Qingshui River in southeast Guizhou.

Last April, I visited Taijiang County in the Southeast Guizhou Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture during the Sisters' Rice Festival. It was a place I expected to see some well-known images: young Miao women liberally attired with silver ornaments, jingling incessantly as they walked, while the silver on their heads glistened in the sun.

Background of the Festival

The Sisters' Rice Festival observed in Taijiang is well documented in books about the ethnic folklore of Guizhou. Taijiang County is where this festival of "eating sisters' rice" arose. The local people call it Luga Liang — "luga" meaning "having a meal" while "liang" refers to the rendezvous between young people. So the festival, which falls on the 14th-16th of the third lunar month, is something like Valentine's Day in the West.

No one is sure when this festival started but one theory about its origin says that in bygone days many Taijiang Miao families found it difficult to marry off their daughters despite their good looks. The elderly blamed this on the place's remoteness, and so decided to launch a festival to attract young men from other places. Women prepared glutinous rice and dyed it in multiple colours with flowers and grass, which they called "sisters' rice", to treat the young men who cared to come. During the festival the young people played *lusheng* (bamboo pipes) and beat drums, and sang love songs to each other. Eventually, horse races and bull and chicken fights were included.

The joviality soon earned the festival a wide reputation and eventually it evolved into an occasion for dating, with the "sisters' rice" serving as a catalyst for love. When a couple bids each other goodbye at the end of the festival, the woman presents the man with some rice in a tiny basket or wrapped up in a new handkerchief. Hidden in the rice is a symbol representing her

1. **During the festival, Miao women not only wear silver ornaments but also decorate their umbrellas with silver accessories.**
2. **Miao girls dancing with sisters' rice in hand**
3. **With all their silver jewellery on, these young ladies shine and jingle when they walk.**
4. **Different branches of the Miao people give performances and show their costumes at the opening ceremony.**

4

decision about him: pine needles or cornsilk mean that she wants him to give her embroidery needles and silk yarn in return. A thorn means that she is willing to spend the rest of her life with him. A pair of chopsticks or red flower pistils means that she wants the man to marry her in a hurry. Chilli or garlic means that she doesn't want anything more to do with him. The sisters' rice clearly determines a relationship and leads numerous young couples to marriage.

Obviously this is a festival centred on women and as such, the locals say it is a "festival hidden in pistils".

Jingling as They Walk

We arrived at Taijiang County on the 14th of the third lunar month, the day the Sisters' Rice Festival began. There was a festive atmosphere everywhere. The festival has evolved from a purely Miao event into a three-day holiday for the entire county and its name shortened to Sisters' Festival. Lanterns were hung everywhere, and villagers arrived at the scene constantly from all directions. The women, old and young, were attired in their festive best. Girls, in particular, wore gaily-embroidered silk dresses and a full array of silver ornaments, which jingled as they walked. As we followed the local people to the centre of the festival, we seemed to be visiting a grand fashion and jewellery show.

Taijiang has lived up to its reputation as China's Number One County for the Miao people, as 96 percent of the local population are Miaos. They stand out among all the Miao people as a fun-loving folk, with sumptuous dress and ornaments, a unique folklore, and a rapid succession of festivals and traditional rituals.

An Opening Like a Fashion Show

The opening ceremony began with the *lusheng* music and beating of drums. Several hundred young Miao women jumped into a dance to the beat of a wooden drum. Suddenly the place became an ocean of glistening and tinkling silver. Young men threaded their way through rows of young women while playing their pipes of various sizes. The largest *lusheng* was as tall as a two-storey house. What impressed me most was the rich varieties of dress, all gaily coloured and glittery, worn by the various branches of Miaos from all corners of the county.

After the opening ceremony the crowd, with pent-up zest, formed large circles and continued to play music and dance. Every circle represented a certain village out to showcase its own dancing style. One circle attracted my attention with its unusually freewheeling dance movements, in which men and women alike shook their torsos and hands in an exaggerated way. I immediately recognised their style as that known among foreigners as "Disco of the East".

The circles of spectators from many villages joined in the dance on their whims. Some had brought wine and continuously handed out bowls of wine to the merry-makers. Soon the festivity reached a climax.

Miao Style Dragon Dance

After a day-long carnival the crowd showed no sign of fatigue. When night fell they once again turned out en masse, crowding all the cross-roads, eagerly anticipating the dragon dance and fireworks display.

The dragon dance is tailored for masculinity and the Miao style is even more so. The men, stripped to the waist, flailed their arms so swiftly that the colourful dragon in their hands swirled in a blur. Magically the world was taken over by a dozen colossal dragons scurrying about and gyrating dramatically. Then came the heart-stirring part, as people set aflame fireworks around the dragon. As fire spurted loudly out, the dragon players showed no fear and continued their dance, creating a raucous scene.

1. Before entering the dancing ground, young women prepare themselves to make sure that they look their best.
2. Drinking, the Miao way to express their hospitality to guests from afar
3. A scene of the dragon dance
4. Wooden-drum Dance, disco of the East

3

4

A Day at the Fights

The following day was the traditional Sisters' Festival. While young people danced to the music, in the county seat and the suburbs, fighting between birds, cocks and bulls was the agenda. Meanwhile, a women's beauty pageant was going on and the Ten Most Beautiful Ladies were finally chosen.

Lots were drawn for the birds' fight, and cages of thrushes were paired off door-to-door. As the doors were opened, the thrushes automatically advanced upon each other for a fight that would last until one was unable to hold its own. Cockfights are crueller than bird fights, as the sparring partners have had their claws and beaks sharpened. The cocks are stubborn and will not quit even if they are bloodily battered.

But no fights are more exciting to watch than bullfights. A streamer with the words "Fight of the Bull King of the Century", was hung up, drawing tens of thousands of onlookers. Some even climbed up the trees and on bridges to command a better look. Amidst thunderous cheers, bulls — much bigger and sturdier than the common draught animals — were led to the fighting ground. Some bulls had red silk draped over their shoulders and a big red flower pinned on their breasts, and others had armoured horns. A bullfight seems more easily settled than a cockfight. Though some bulls fight to the very end, others seem to know their limits and take flight without so much as putting up a fight. It was not until late afternoon that the King of Bulls eventually emerged, to the immense pride of the man who had raised it. Two days later, we could still see the Bull King, colourfully bedecked, standing in the street by his proud owner.

1.2. Fierce cockfight
3. Thrushes are used for bird fights.
4. Fighting for the honour of the King of Bull of the Century
5. The feast lasts until midnight.
6. Crowds watching the bullfight on the opposite bank

Sisters' Rice and Festive Wine

Sisters' Rice is prepared of steamed glutinous rice and dyed red, yellow, blue, purple and green with the juice of wild flowers and grass. This rice is eaten during the Sisters' Festival or used as a gift for lovers and friends. A young man who fancies a young woman is obliged to ask her for such rice, and he would return during the next year's Sisters' Festival with a basket filled with gifts according to her hints.

The Sisters' Rice is eaten either with chopsticks or fingers. Wine and food are generously served as well during such a feast. The Miaos habitually offer generous [illegible] to their guests, but they won't insist if the guest politely declines. If you are not much of a drinker, do not accept the wine cup with both hands. Once accepted, you are obliged to drain it, and your host would fill it again. If you throw your neck and open your mouth instead, then your host will pour the wine down your throat, and [illegible] to "wine" as you [illegible]. Do not wipe the [illegible] off or else you will be forced to drink until you are drunk.

6

Beauty Pageant at Shidong

On the third day we drove 40 kilometres to Shidong by the Qingshui River for a look at the Sisters' Festival that is deeply rooted in the local folklore. The local Miaos had just returned to their villages from the county seat, where they had been for the festivities, to begin another round of celebrations. The women folks who work away from home, or have married and moved elsewhere, always return to their native villages for the occasion.

At a bridgehead 10 kilometres from Shidong, we were stopped by a bunch of young Miao women, who made us drink until we were half drunk. By the time we reached Shidong, a dragon boat race had just reached a climax. The race was supposed to take place 10 days later, but was held ahead of schedule to add to the festival atmosphere. The strapping young sailors took the opportunity to show off their masculine valour to their female friends.

Right after the Dragon Boat Festival we embarked in a dugout canoe down the river to Yangjiazhai Village for a massive riverside dancing party. The wide beach was crowded with several thousand people — singers and dancers, as well as female peddlers of Miao-style embroidery. The merry-makers had divided into a number of giant circles, with women beating wooden drums and dancing to the beat in the centre, and men forming outside rings to marvel at them. Interestingly, all the pretty young women were followed by mothers or grannies who also danced or simply stood in the centre watching their girls. They were there to help their dressed-up girls readjust their silver ornaments. Each girl's ornaments weigh over 10 kilograms, and includes a silver horn-shape crown two feet long. The Miaos regard the Sisters' Festival as the year's most important beauty pageant, and mothers certainly want the best for their daughters.

The dance steps were rather simple and the rhythm not complicated. It did not take long for us to learn and dance with them. I realised that the entire affair was more like a fashion show where the women showed off their feminine beauty.

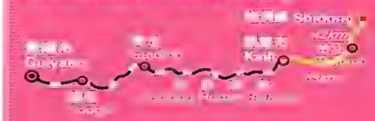
The crowd thinned out at dusk. Couples began disappearing into the riverside forest to sing each other love songs in an antiphonal style. Some joined together for a picnic.

During the Sisters' Festival women folks are given a lot of prerogatives. Unmarried ones are pampered and their families are obliged to prepare food for them to treat their lovers and friends. As guests from afar we had the good fortune to be invited to one of the families to enjoy the sisters' rice.

Translated by Ling Yuan

Tips for the Traveller

Location and Transport of Shidong:



Train from Guiyang to Kaili: [illegible] kilometres, [illegible] yuan. Bus from Kaili to Taijiang [illegible] kilometres, 10 yuan. Bus from Taijiang to Shidong, 47 kilometres, 9 yuan.

Lodging in Taijiang: Miaojiang Hotel or [illegible] Hotel, 168 yuan festival rate a night.

Lodging in Shidong: Reception house of the town at 20 yuan a night, or with a local family for 5-10 yuan a night.

Lodging in Kaili: Kaili Hotel at 150 yuan a night, or [illegible] Hotel at 168 yuan a night.

1. Senior men in their festive best
2. Young men show their vigour in a dragon boat.
3. Shidong is the hometown of silver ornaments, where craftsmen still use traditional techniques.
4. "Stepping the drum" means dancing around a drum and following its beat.
5. The Sisters' Festival is taken as a local beauty contest, so every mother dresses her daughter carefully.

恭喜發財
人順家順

SIGHTSEEING IN NORTH GUIZHOU

The area of Qianbei, or North Guizhou, includes two cities, **Zunyi** and **Chishui**. The area is of historical importance because it was the strategic turning point of the Red Army during its Long March. It is also home of the national liquor Maotai. Besides, there are numerous waterfalls.

Zunyi: Where the Milestone of History Was Laid

Photos & article by Li Youxiang

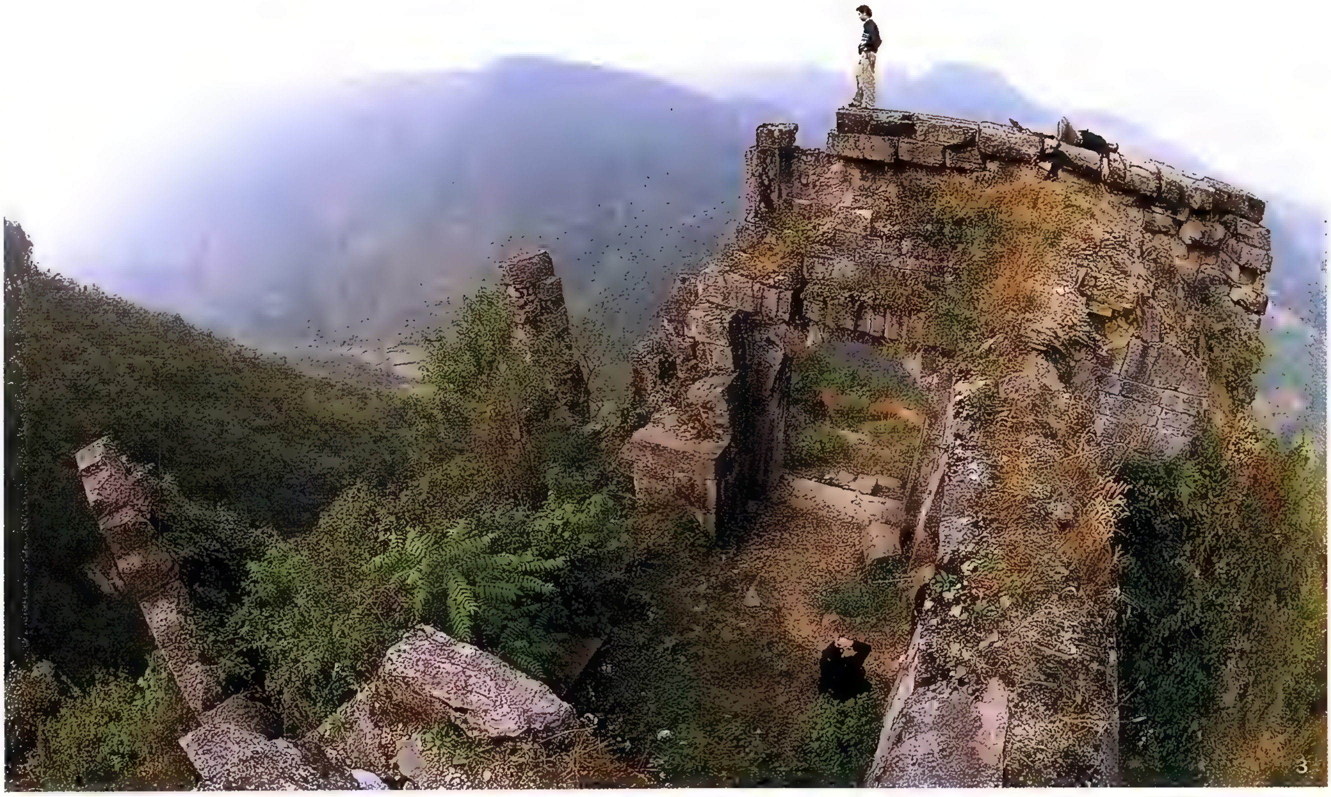
Historical Sites on the Wujiang River

The 'Royal' Tomb

In Yong'an some 10 kilometres from Zunyi, lies a magnificent cemetery belonging to the Yang clan who served as chieftain of this region. It is regarded by the local residents as the "royal" tomb. Of all the Yang tombs, the one of Yang Can is the most magnificent.

For 724 years, 29 generations of the Yang clan ruled the area, becoming the most powerful rulers of northern Guizhou after arriving in Bozhou in 876. The Yangs got along well with the local people. Yang Can, the 13th generation ruler in particular, ruled benevolently for 40 years over a stable society.

Built between 1241 and 1252, Yang Can's tomb consists of northern and southern chambers, each having an entrance, and front and rear rooms. Inside



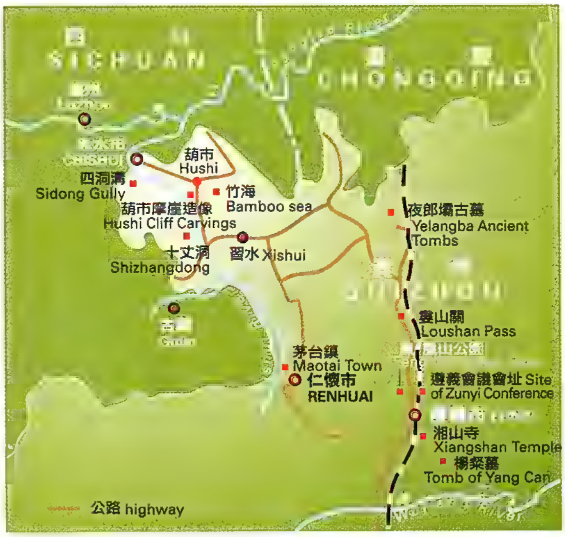
are many stone carvings of figures, animals and flowers. In particular the 28 pottery figures in the images of warriors, labourers and palace maids are the most eye-catching. A mural on the wall of the tomb portrays figures with bare chests and feet, vividly reflecting the life of ethnic minorities in Southwest China.

The Fall of the Yangs

Hailongtun, historically the most significant military stronghold of the Zunyi area, is also associated with the Yang clan.

Embraced by mountains on all sides, Hailongtun guarded the strategic link between Guizhou and Sichuan. Yang Yinglong, the 29th and last generation of the Yang rulers, took advantage of the strategic position and, united with the Miaos, showed open discontent for the Ming court. The enraged court dispatched a force of 200,000 and finally defeated Yang, who committed suicide at the end of the battle. The "forbidden tablet" erected by Yang Yinglong after he proclaimed war against the central government in 1596 is an important cultural relic.

The city of Zunyi marked a historical turning point in modern Chinese history. In 1935, when the Red Army led by the Communist Party of China was on the Long March to the north, the Zunyi Conference was held and the lead position of Mao Zedong in the Party and the Red Army was secured. As described by US writer



1. **Wujiangdu Reservoir, situated between Zunyi and Xifeng, is a favoured tourist spot.**
2. **Xiangshan Temple built in the Ming Dynasty in Zunyi**
3. **Ruins of the Hailongtun Fort where Yang Yinglong and his men fought against the government troops**
4. **Yang Can's tomb, known as the "royal tomb" by the locals**

Association with the Red Army

1. The site of the Zunyi Conference, at which Mao Zedong's lead position in the Party and in the Red Army was decided
2. Visitors put red silk ribbons on this sculpture of a woman Red Army soldier saving a child to show their respect.

Harrison Salisbury in his book *The Long March — an Untold Story*: "The Zunyi meeting came to a close and the Long March continued, now under Mao Zedong's guidance. The road that China would take, at least for the next half century, was thus decided."

The meeting site is a two-storey wood-and-brick building of mixed Chinese and Western architectural styles in the old section of Zunyi. Above its door are characters in Mao Zedong's handwriting, "Site of the Zunyi Conference". The small room of this meeting retains its original look.

Loushan Pass: A Great Victory

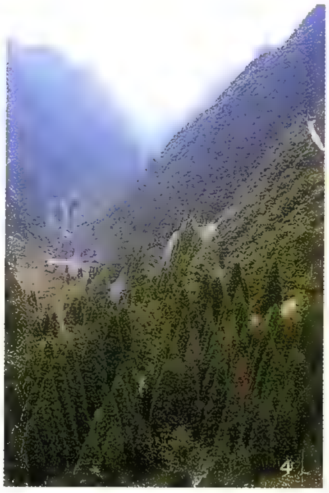
Xiaolong Hill at the southern foot of Fenghuang Mountain in Zunyi is locally known as Red Army Hill because a cemetery for the Red Army martyrs of the 1930s is situated there.

A 30-metre-high monument announces itself as the "Monument to the Red Army Martyrs" in the handwriting of Deng Xiaoping. It bears bas-relief sculptures depicting Red Army stories such as "Crossing Wujiang River by Force" and "Great Victory at Loushan Pass".

The strategic Loushan Pass is on the 1,576-metre Great Loushan Mountain in northern Zunyi County, facing Sichuan to the north and guarding the entrance to Guizhou and Guangxi in the south. In February 1935, the Red Army achieved its first major victory during the Long March at this pass.

Mao Zedong wrote a poem about this victory and the pass has become a tourist attraction for its history.

Crossing the Wujiang



Wujiang is the largest river running through Guizhou. Its torrential currents provide the province with rich water resources and also create breathtaking scenery, especially in northern Guizhou.

In January 1935 when the Red Army passed here on their Long March, they attacked Zunyi through three routes. They won the battle by crossing the Wujiang River at the two crosses — Huilongchang and Jiangjiehe.

Crossing Chishui Four Times

To the north is Maotai Town, home of the famous Maotai liquor and the place where the Red Army crossed Chishui River three times.

After the Zunyi Conference, 30,000 Red Army troops fought an enemy 400,000 strong. The Red Army adopted flexible tactics and made unexpected river crossings on roughly-made bridges altogether four times. Thus they broke through the enemy's blockade to head north.

At the site where the army crossed the river a monument has been erected with words depicting the crossings carved on it.

The Aromatic Home of Liquor

Guizhou Province is renowned for famous brand liquors, including the Maotai, Dongjiu, Yaxi and Xishui Daqu, which are produced in northern Guizhou. A visit to these liquor towns is a treat for those who are interested in the culture and those who want to taste the liquors at their home breweries.

More than 2,000 years ago, northern Guizhou was home to the Kingdom of Yelang where China's first famous liquor, Ju, was produced. Zunyi's Culture of Liquor Museum traces the ancient history of the local home brews and the various styles of drinking, such as using ox-horn, turning-around and tasting the liquor. Besides, it has a fascinating collection of unique liquor artifacts, including a Han-dynasty pottery liquor vat and Ming-dynasty liquor cups.

Donggong Town in Zunyi's northern suburbs has a brewery with a history of 200 years and produces the

3. **Many tourists like to put on Red Army suits and have their pictures taken in front of the site of the Zunyi Conference.**

4. **Loushan Pass, where the Red Army won their first victory on the Long March**

5. **A huge advertisement for Maotai liquor, the carved column symbolising its position as the national liquor**

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1. **The bridge leading to Maotai, hometown of the Maotai liquor**
2. **Along the Chishui River, raw materials are shipped in and liquors shipped out.**
3. **A cell for the storage of Maotai liquor**
4. **The Wine God**
5. **The Bamboo Forest Park in Chishui covers a vast area. (by Hong Kaidi)**
6. **In a bamboo grove**
7. **Eating a bamboo meal in the Bamboo Forest Park**
8. **An old Chinese fir tree found in the bamboo forest (by Hong Kaidi)**

famous Dongjiu liquor. It is brewed with sorghum and two different kinds of yeast mixed with wheat, rice and a total of over 130 kinds of medicinal herbs. The special distilling techniques and varied ingredients set this brand apart.

Zunyi's Yaxi Town produces Yaxi liquor, a white brew with a strong aroma.

Xishui Daqu is made in Xishui County with water from the Chishui River. It is said to have a lingering fragrance.

Becoming Intoxicated Without Drinking

Northwest of Zunyi is the famous Maotai Town, which produces Maotai liquor, one of the world's three most famous brands. In the town the aroma of Maotai liquor fills the air. Apart from a few large-scale liquor producers, there are several dozen distillers of varying sizes. With such a strong liquor smell visitors may feel somewhat drunk even before drinking any.

The town has a museum of liquor. Everyone in the town knows the story of Maotai's rise to fame.

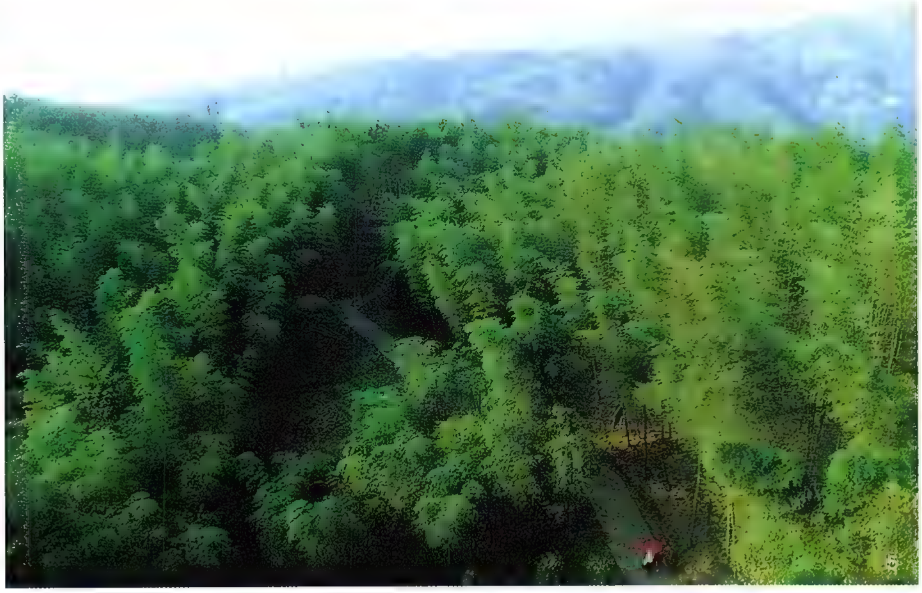
At the 1915 Panama World Fair, Maotai, simply and almost carelessly packed, was initially ignored by the public. Under tremendous pressure to do something, the brewery's representative publicly smashed a bottle and the whole area was immediately filled with an irresistible fragrance. At the end, Maotai was awarded a gold prize.

Mentioning the making of the liquor, people who make it will proudly describe the procedure: "Add in the ingredients twice, let them ferment eight times and heat the wine seven times.... Carefully mix it and then seal the vat for four years...."

In Maotai Town travellers can visit small liquor shops that line the streets to experience the customs and habits associated with the liquor. The Maotai liquor has become an indispensable part of people's life there. When entertaining guests, or presenting gifts to friends, at weddings or at funerals, it is always ubiquitous.

Once in Maotai, even non-drinkers would like to taste a little to feel the magic of this liquor.

Chishui: Heavenly World of Water and Bamboo



Into the Sea of Bamboo

Article by Bai Ju

In the city of Chishui by the Chishui River there is a vast expanse of bamboo that stretches as far as the eye can see. The bamboo groves protect the water source of the river, allowing it to flow throughout the year. In return, the river nurtures the bamboo plants and supports a world of green.

A Source of Legends

Like the ancient river of Chishui, the sea of bamboo has many legendary stories about its origin. Bamboo is the religious totem of the Han, Miao and Yi people living in the area and influences their characteristics with its lofty spirit. It is believed that it was the river and the diligence of local people that allowed the plant to flourish.

The town of Hushi under Chishui's administration is the centre of the sea of bamboo and also the origin of the bamboo's spread into a "sea". This *nan* bamboo is not a native plant. Some 260 years ago, a young man called Li Litai brought in three bamboo plants and, with local people's care and the nourishing Chishui water, these plants flourished into great patches of sturdy green bamboo. Now over 20,000 hectares of this species, in addition to 10,000 hectares of mixed bamboo species, cover the land, making the area one of the 10 largest bamboo groves in the country.

Driving through the bamboo groves feels like swimming on green waves. On the top of the Sea Viewing Tower, one can have a lovely panoramic view of the sea of bamboo.

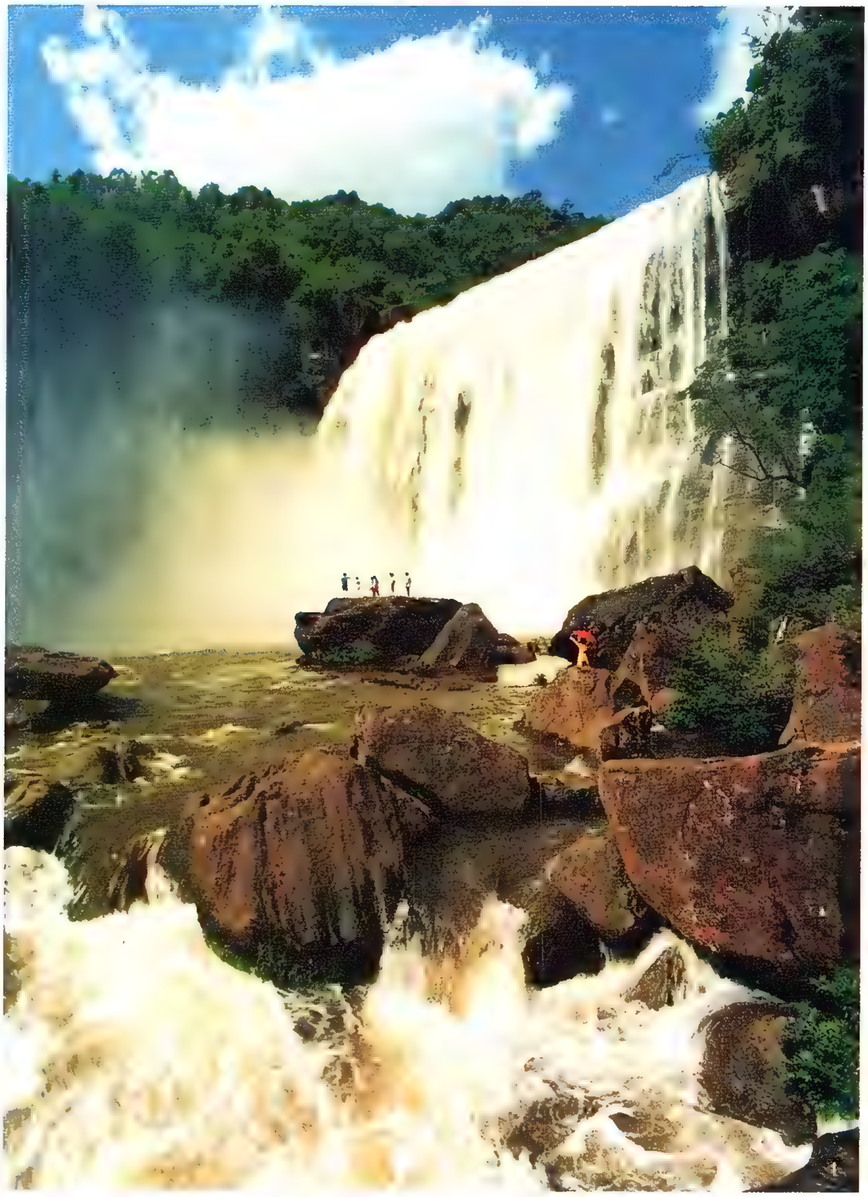
Strange Sounds

The sounds of the "heavenly gong" and "earthly drum" in the sea of bamboo are most interesting. If you speak in front of a certain crescent-shaped rock dozens of metres high, you will hear sounds like a gong being struck in the sky. About a kilometre away is a huge 360-step rock staircase. When you put your feet on any of the 240 of its stairs, the deep sound of this "earthly drum" is heard.

Song Dongpo, the renowned Song-dynasty poet, regarded bamboo as man's best companion, suggesting that "one can go without meat and food, but cannot live without bamboo". The local people view the plants as indispensable. The bamboo is not only used to build houses and make furniture, but is also used in cooking rice (inside the tubes) and bamboo shoots dishes.

The Capital of Waterfalls

Article by Zhao Erqing



The city of Chishui is truly a capital of waterfalls for there are nearly 1,000 of them cascading into 35 rivers.

In the rolling hills, cascading waterfalls are a frequent sight. That every hill has waterfalls and every river is fed by waterfalls is an apt description.

1. **Shizhangdong Waterfall is as magnificent as the Huangguoshu Waterfalls. (by Liu Xiaobin)**
2. **A danxia rock found in Chishui's Changqian Gully**
3. **Water-Curtain Cave of Sidonggou Waterfall (by Hong Kaidi)**
4. **A one-tree bridge in the Sidonggou Scenic Area (by Hong Kaidi)**
5. **Spinulose tree fern is considered as the living fossil of plants.**

Magnificent Rainbows

In the sunshine after a shower is the ideal time to visit the great Shizhangdong Waterfall. In fact, the 40-kilometre way to the waterfall is already a tour of waterfalls. In the Renzhi Stream valley, a five-tier fall thrusts its might down 300 metres. At Chenjiawan, a 284-metre-high three-tier fall offers another wondrous natural sight. Zhongdong Waterfall, resembling a wide curtain, is regarded by scholars as a "typical representative of curtain-like waterfalls in China". And finally, the magnificence of the 80-metre-wide, 76-metre-high giant Shizhangdong Waterfall certainly compares with China's greatest fall, the Huangguoshu Waterfalls. Water roars like irresistible waves down the cliffs and lands into a valley of green, reflecting the sunshine in multi-colours.

The fall, by forcing its way down a purple rock, transforms into countless curtains of crystal water beads with a slight red tinge. The watery curtains hit rock edges here and there, creating mist and transforming into even finer water beads that fly towards the pond at the foot of the rock. The sun casts its rays on the mists, bringing forth many colourful rings that encircle visitors as they step forward toward the fall. Such a sight is said to be rare in the world.

A Cave Behind Every Waterfall

Sidong (Four-Cave Gully) is another group of waterfalls. A four-tier fall spreads over 40 metres wide and washes its way down, the highest drop being 60 metres. Its tiers are more or less evenly spread out along a mountain stream over four kilometres. Interestingly, each fall has

a cave behind it, creating four "water-curtain caves".

Changshiti (Long Stone Stair) Waterfall, formed by waters from two merged sources, is a different kind of attraction. With a drop of 300 metres, this five-tier waterfall emerging from a vast bamboo grove looks like an elegant girl walking out of the sea.

Tips for Travelling Around Zunyi

Transport

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Accommodation

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Hotels in Maotai Town

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Tips for Travelling Around Chishui

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Accommodation

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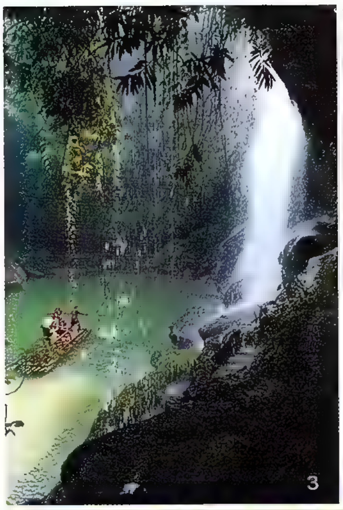

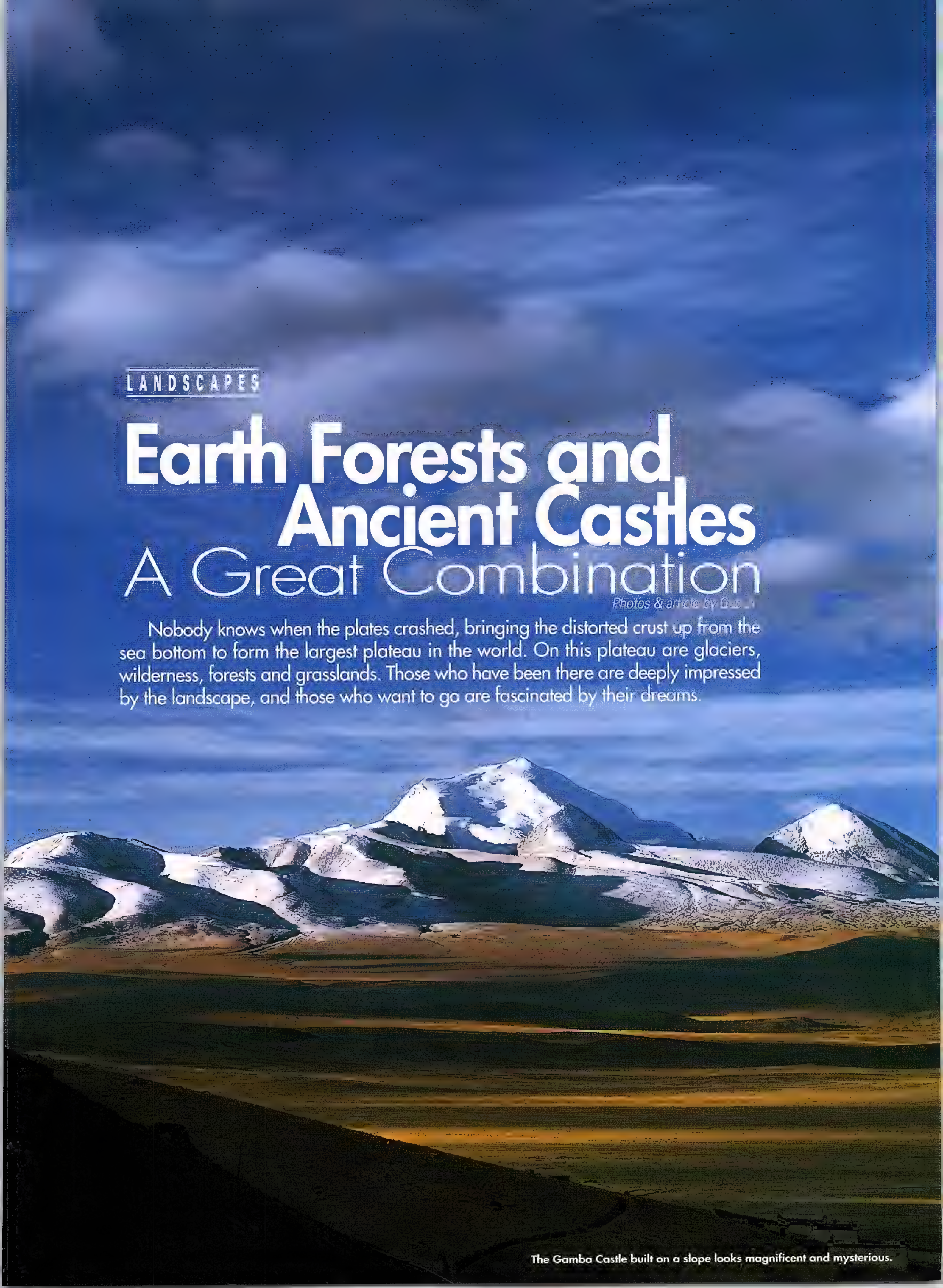

LANDSCAPES

Earth Forests and Ancient Castles

A Great Combination

Photos & article by Guo Ji

Nobody knows when the plates crashed, bringing the distorted crust up from the sea bottom to form the largest plateau in the world. On this plateau are glaciers, wilderness, forests and grasslands. Those who have been there are deeply impressed by the landscape, and those who want to go are fascinated by their dreams.

The Gamba Castle built on a slope looks magnificent and mysterious.

A solitary castle constructed on the top of a hill in Zada

Eroded by Nature's Elements

Earth forests are part of Tibet's topography. The yellow earth and red soil were pushed up by nature's forces — wind, snow, rain, heat and cold — to form the land's character and strength. Ancient castles always accompany the earth forest topography. Experiencing the same erosion as the earth forests, the castles' ruins have melted into the land. The earth forests lie in rows with "moats" resembling ancient castles and the castle ruins have lost their edges and corners, resembling vast earth forests.

Geologists would scientifically study the geological vein and the rock layers, while historians would search every corner for traces of history. Tourists, without exception, are all overwhelmed by this unique natural scene.

Ancient Castles All Have Stories

The most mysterious is Ngari. On the 320,000-square-kilometre vast expense of wilderness, the Xiangzhuang Canyon extends for a few dozen kilometres. The Zada Earth Forest and the ruins of Guge Kingdom lie in this canyon. In the brown coloured earthen forest, the upper part is the palaces, the middle, the temples and the lower, residential houses. The 300 houses, 300 caves, fortresses, Buddhist pagodas, defense works, tunnels, and immense murals all tell the story of the kingdom 700 years ago, both its prosperity and decline.

The most moving and tragic story is about the ancient castle in Gyangzê. On the cliffs of Mount Zongshan, the several broken walls are the witnesses of the Tibetan army's heroic fight against the invading enemy in the mid-19th century.

The most magnificent is the Gamba Castle which stands on a sheer slope in northeastern Gamba County. Though only ruins are left, it still demonstrates an imposing style. Historically, it was the border garrison of Gamba clan. The inside resembles an European castle in the Middle Ages.

Tips for the Traveller

There are two routes from Lhasa to Gamba. One is Lhasa-Nagarzê-Gyangzê-Kangmar-Gamba, about 400 kilometres long. This is the shortest.

The second route is Lhasa-Xigazê-Sa'gya-Dinggye-Gamba, about 580 kilometres. It offers a chance to visit the famous Sa'gya Monastery and views of Qomolangma Peak.

Special notes: The Gamba Castle ruins are in an army barracks. Permission is required before going there.

There are four routes to Ngari. One is along the Xinjiang-Tibet Highway from Yecheng in Xinjiang and the rest are from Lhasa, namely the southern, northern and central routes. The northern route starts from Amdo to Gar, crossing Qamtang Grassland and passing a vast wilderness. The central route passes Coqen, Gêrzê and again a vast wilderness. The scenery is monotonous. The southern route passes Zhongba, Burang to Gar, following the Yarlung Zangbo River and crossing the Himalayas and the Gangdise Mountains. The scenery is picturesque, but there is no food, fuel or lodging along the route.

Translated by M.Q.

Eroded earth formations lying by the Namco Lake

Luoyan (Naked Rock) Canyon in Zada

The lonely ruins of ancient castles in Gamba County

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Tasting Wuchang Fish at Peach Blossom Garden

Photos & article by Li Wu

In the Oriental Hotel in Wuhan, capital of Hubei, there is a restaurant called Taohuayuan (Peach Blossom Garden) which specialises in famous Chu-style dishes popular in today's Hunan and Hubei provinces.

A Rare Species of Fish

Your first choice from the menu should of course be Wuchang fish, a dish named after this town now within Wuhan. This fish is in fact the blunt-snout bream, a local specialty caught only in Liangzi Lake in Ezhou, Hubei. All the other lakes around Wuhan have only another type of bream that looks similar to Wuchang fish. Most tourists wrongly conclude that any fish with a flat body, small head and big belly is the Wuchang fish.

Indeed, it is so difficult to distinguish that even Su Shi, a great man of letters and a famous gourmet in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), was once fooled.

An Ancient Gourmet Was Fooled

It is said that one day Wang Anshi, a prime minister and also a great man of letters of the Northern Song, invited Su to dinner. He asked Su to buy some Wuchang fish on his way as it would go well with their drinks. When Su showed Wang the fish he had bought, Wang said it was not right. Su was not convinced and argued. Wang said nothing and told the cook to prepare it. When the cooked fish were brought to the table, Wang plied the first fish open with chopsticks and put a piece of bone into a bowl of clear water. Then, a streak of oil appeared in the water. He did the same to the next two fish. Only the third one produced three streaks of oil. Pointing to the third, Wang said, "Only this one is real Wuchang fish."

It seems that Wuchang fish has more fat than other species of bream. Other differences in appearance are hard to describe without having the fish at hand.

Tasting Is Believing

The best way to eat the delicious Wuchang fish is steamed in clear broth. Generally, all of Wuhan's restaurants offer it this way. The preparation is fairly easy: Descale a one-kilogram fish, cut both sides in an orchid pattern, coat it with a thin layer of lard, then add salt, cooking wine, sliced ginger and spring onion, and steam it for 15 minutes. Cover it with some colourful vegetable slices before serving.

Besides serving the best steamed Wuchang fish, Taohuayuan Restaurant also prepares the fish steamed with arbutus berries or with fermented glutinous rice. Once I ordered the latter and when it arrived, I could hardly believe it was fish. Yet, the head and tail were there. The body was replaced by two neat rows of lovely "flower balls" made of meat and fermented glutinous rice.

My curiosity was aroused and so I talked to the 40-year-old chef, Wang Changsheng, a native of Wuhan. Asked where he had learned his cooking skills, he smiled and said he had learned by himself.

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A Born Gourmet

Wang said he was born a gourmet and was fond of cooking. As a child, he would always help his mother in the kitchen. "There were not many boys like me," he said. In this area of China, people like to invite friends home for dinner and treat them with homemade dishes. Taking praise from his friends and relatives as encouragement, he aspired to improve his culinary skills.

At 18, he quit his job at a dyeing mill and established his own small restaurant on Taibei Road in Hankou. The Dainty Restaurant offered dishes like home cooking, and steamed Wuchang Fish was a must on the daily menu.

However, the more he learned, the less satisfied he was. He began to study diligently to improve his cutting and slicing skills, garnishes, and other things. Later, he sold his restaurant and took a job in this big one, intending to learn more. Now, although he has changed from a boss to an employee, he feels it is worthwhile as long as the restaurant provides him a chance to demonstrate his skills.

Creating Characteristic Hubei Dishes

I asked Wang what were the characteristics of Hubei cuisine. He replied, "To be honest, in China, Hubei cuisine has never been prominent." Why? Because Hubei is right in the middle of China, so the different styles of Sichuan, Hunan, Guangdong, Yangzhou and Shandong cuisine have all become mixed together here. "But when you read our menu," Wang added proudly, "you will find many newly devised dishes with more distinct local features of Hubei."

Translated by Li Zhenguo

1. **Steamed Wuchang fish (by You Xiang)**
2. **These appetisers symbolise Wuhan's multicultural cuisine.**
3. **Golden-thread beef rolls**
4. **Mushrooms and seasonal vegetables**
5. **Sliced fish with fresh green vegetables**
6. **Stuffed Wuchang Fish (by Xiao Gang)**
7. **Taohuayuan Restaurant (by Xiao Gang)**
8. **The reputation of Wuchang fish was enhanced after Mao Zedong's poem about having the dish following his cross-Yangtse swim was published. (by You Xiang)**

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Two Snacks of Beijing

Photos & article by Jianhui

Fried cakes and sweetened dough, sesame cakes and rice flour buns. When I just bought the cake, I hear the sale of steamed buns.

Three coins can buy lots of food, rice cakes of many kinds. After having a bowl of sweet bean milk, again I eat tea soup and flour tea.

This popular local melody describing the snacks in the old days gives a vivid picture of the life of Beijing people at the time. Fortunately, today we can still find many of the traditional snacks.

What should be tasted first? Let's start with something related to the imperial gates in Beijing.

Gate Nail Meat Cake

One architectural character of the ancient capital city of Beijing is its walls encircling the imperial palace and the city as a whole. Built into these walls are vermilion gates with many neatly laid golden nails, which doubtlessly help enhance their grandeur. Gate Nail Meat Cake got its name from its similarity in shape and colour.

The nailed door of the Qing dynasty buildings in Beijing (by Chan Yat Nin)

Records show that the meat cake actually came from the imperial kitchen of the Qing palace. Empress Dowager Cixi sometimes gave the cake to nobles and imperial relatives as rewards.

The main ingredients of the cake are wheat flour, beef, spring onion and other special spices. The cake is yellowish and crispy outside and soft and delicious inside.

A Beijing resident may, according to his appetite, order a few cakes and a bowl of gruel plus a small dish of pickled vegetable for only three to five yuan.

Gate Nail Meat Cake ranked first in the competition of the Ten Top Local Snacks in Beijing. To have a taste, visit the restaurant at 30 Nanxiaojie, Chaoyangmennei Street, Beijing; take buses No. 24 and No. 110 or No. 109 and No. 112 trolley bus. Tel: 6513 8625.

Gate Nail Meat Cake looks like a big copper nail.

Gate Nail Meat Cake before cooking

Quick-boiled Tripe

Varieties of Quick-boiled Tripe

Another popular Beijing snack is Baodu, or Quick-boiled Tripe, which is served in many restaurants. Some of the old shops like to add their surnames to the restaurant names, such as Baodu Wang, Baodu Man, Baodu Feng, to distinguish themselves. Sometimes they also add the locations, such as East City and Xuanwu, to the names of the restaurants.

About half a century ago, there were only peddlers selling the Quick-boiled Tripe in front of Dong'an Market on Wangfujing Street and in the area around Qianmen Street.

Originally only mutton tripe was used, and later beef tripe became a substitute since there was a shortage of mutton tripe. Gradually, beef tripe became the main ingredient.

Special attention is paid to preparing the Quick-boiled Tripe. First the materials must be fresh and of high quality. The tripe usually comes from Dachang Hui Autonomous County in Hebei Province and must be slaughtered on the same day. A complete tripe can be cut into different categories for different uses. To make it tender, fresh and tasty, ingredients are also important and there may be as many as 20 or more. The cooking technique, including the control of fire and the cooking time, is crucial to the dish. If it is cooked too long it will be too tough, and if not long enough it will be underdone.

A good meal including a plate of Quick-boiled Tripe, a bottle of beer, a bowl of chopped entrails and two sesame cakes costs you only 30 yuan.

One of the best places for tasting the Quick-boiled Tripe is Baodu Wang at 68 Chaoyangmennei Street, Beijing. Take buses No. 24 and No. 110, or trolley buses No. 109 and No. 112 and get off at Beixiaojie. The restaurant's green signboard stands out on the northeastern corner of the crossroad. Tel: 6404 0608.

Translated by M. O.

Baodu Wang Restaurant specialises in Quick-boiled Tripe

Photos & article by Wu Min

Rocks That Lay Eggs

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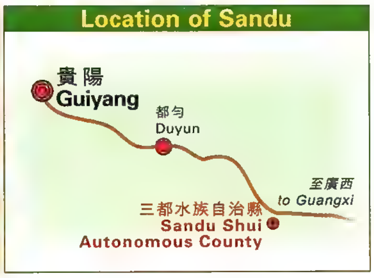
It is said that anyone who can solve the six enigmas in Qiannan earns a free world tour. But of course it is not so easy. Read on to learn about one of the enigmas.

Sandu Shui Autonomous County in the Miaoling Mountain in South Guizhou is the only autonomous county inhabited by the Shui ethnic group in China. It is said there the rocks in the mountain can give birth to rock eggs. With great curiosity, we walked for two whole hours to Gugua Village to see such eggs. Entering the village, we saw that the round smooth stones lay in front of every household. To find the source of these rock eggs, we walked along a little stream to the mountain valley near the village. There we saw clearly exposed, egg-shaped round stones of different sizes actually embedded in the steep cliffs by the stream. The smaller ones weigh several dozen kilograms and the bigger ones over 100 kilograms. Some were quite close to the surface. Pointing to one, a villager told us: "That one is about to come out. Every 30 years, one egg is laid." We examined one on the cliff. It was clean and neat, and dark crimson with distinct veins. The egg density is greater than the rock around it.

Geologists have different views about rock eggs' origins. According to Chan Lung-sheng from the Hong Kong University's Geology Department, this mountain area belongs to the Later Devonian Period and different structures give rise to different shapes with pressure during the formation of the rock stratum. Other geologists and biologists, after analysing the surface veins, hold that heat in the earth's crust may create a kind of crystal from mineral components different than the main rock and expel it gradually from the rock. The Guizhou Science Academy's geologists have completely ruled out by chemical examinations the possibility that the rock eggs are fossils of dinosaur's eggs. Another reasonable explanation is that it results from Guizhou's karst topography. Long ago this region was ocean and whirlpools may have pounded the rocks into spheroids. After the ocean became land, these denser spheroids were exposed like eggs being laid, as the surrounding rock weathered faster than they did.

The geologists' differing opinions, however, do not in the least detract visitors from being fascinated by the marvels of Mother Nature.

1. A rock egg lying in the stream
2. This rock egg is about to come out.
3. Rock eggs, in halves, for use as household utensils

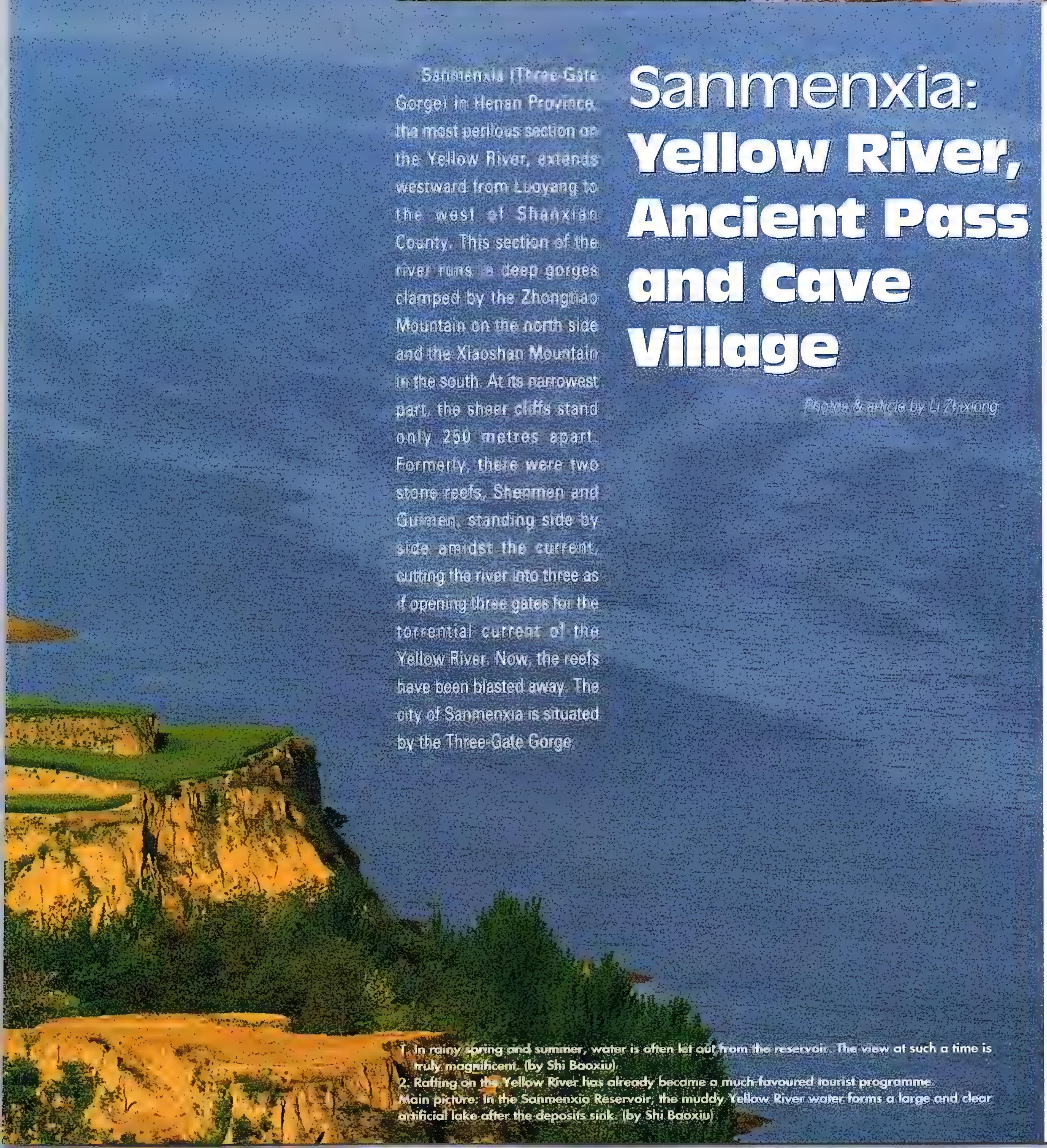


HIGHLIGHTS

Sanmenxia: Yellow River, Ancient Pass and Cave Village

Photos & article by Li Zhixiong

Sanmenxia (Three-Gate Gorge) in Henan Province, the most perilous section on the Yellow River, extends westward from Luoyang to the west of Shanxian County. This section of the river runs in deep gorges clamped by the Zhongtiao Mountain on the north side and the Xiaoshan Mountain in the south. At its narrowest part, the sheer cliffs stand only 250 metres apart. Formerly, there were two stone reefs, Shenmen and Guimen, standing side by side amidst the current, cutting the river into three as if opening three gates for the torrential current of the Yellow River. Now, the reefs have been blasted away. The city of Sanmenxia is situated by the Three-Gate Gorge.



1. In rainy spring and summer, water is often let out from the reservoir. The view at such a time is truly magnificent. (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. Rafting on the Yellow River has already become a much-favoured tourist programme.

Main picture: In the Sanmenxia Reservoir, the muddy Yellow River water forms a large and clear artificial lake after the deposits sink. (by Shi Baoxiu)

Cruises on the Yellow River

I arrived at the Yellow River's bank, where, according to a legend, Yu the Great axed a tall mountain into three channels, called Renman (Man's Gate), Shenmen (Celestials' Gate) and Guimen (Ghosts' Gate). Sanmenxia, a newly developed city by the river, got its name from the gorge.

The pier for the start of my Yellow River cruise, by the Taiyang Ferry, is where the famous Han-dynasty general Han Xin led his army across the river in a sneak attack on the State of Wei. Now it is newly renovated so that large cruise boats can anchor there. On the ship, tourists are greeted by local folks in ancient costumes, beating drums and gongs.

As we boarded, there were still patches of blue in the sky and the water was as smooth as a mirror. The troupe from Sanmenxia City vividly performed a number of ancient comedies and tragedies as well as adaptations of historical love stories. I enjoyed both the performance and scenery on the banks. In a little while, however, dark clouds filled the sky and the strong wind blew the performers' costumes around. Waves pounded the hull of the boat, sending up great splashes. The movement of the boat made me a little dizzy and I had to sit down to feel safe. But, the performers seemed not to notice the swirling wind and high waves, perhaps because they were locals who were used to the harsh conditions.

Tracing an Old Grain Route

The next day, my friends invited me on a Yellow River rafting trip. Remembering the wind and waves the previous day, I was worried. However, the sun was shining and I could not refuse the temptation of the popular saying "One's heart will never be at rest if one does not reach the Yellow River". Rubber dinghies for 10 people were guided by experienced helmsmen down the river. We started at Zhongliu Dizhu (Firm Rock in Midstream). The river seemed perfectly calm and safe. As the temperature approached 30°C, all of us wished to jump in for a swim.

Amidst the *suona* music, the boatmen shouted in unison, "Here we go!" The rafts plunged into the middle of the current. In the beginning, it was fairly smooth and comfortable and we could admire the traces of an ancient plank way built for boat trackers on the perpendicular rock. The section we floated along was the only waterway for transporting grain to the western capital Chang'an (now Xi'an) in ancient times. It is said that at that time the current there was extremely dangerous and up to 90 percent of the passing boats were engulfed in the waves.

Upon the Turbulent Rapids

"We are approaching a dangerous shoal, and everyone please follow my whistle beat to row the raft hard in unison", the helmsman ordered. Barely had he finished, and we immediately felt the increase in the current. In no time, a big wave threw the raft up into air, then dropped it

1. By the Daba (Big Dam) Pier is a sculpture, Yu the Great Harnesses the Water. (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. Willows by the banks of the reservoir (by Shi Baoxiu)
3. When the Sanmenxia Reservoir was built in 1957, the three natural "gates" were all blasted off. Only two reefs Zhongliu Dizhu and Liandanlu are left now.

heavily. Cries of horror sounded now and then. I found that sitting in the stern or the bow was the worst. The waves came one after another and the dinghy simply floated about like an insignificant leaf. Suddenly, the raft moved on to smooth waters and beautiful views once again unfolded before us. The shoal, the rapids and the cries had all been left behind.

Ashore in Shanxi

When we passed the second dangerous shoal, less fearful cries were heard, as we all concentrated more on rowing. By the end, we had covered more than 10 kilometres in just over two hours and disembarked in Shanxi Province. We were all soaked from head to foot. Then, I visualised the troubles of the grain boats travelling this formidable route to the imperial capitals in the Sui and Tang dynasties.

4. Roaming the reservoir on a pleasure-boat

5. About 50 kilometres downstream from the reservoir, the water turns extremely clear. Country folks take this kind of double-hull small boats across the river. (by Shi Baoxiu)

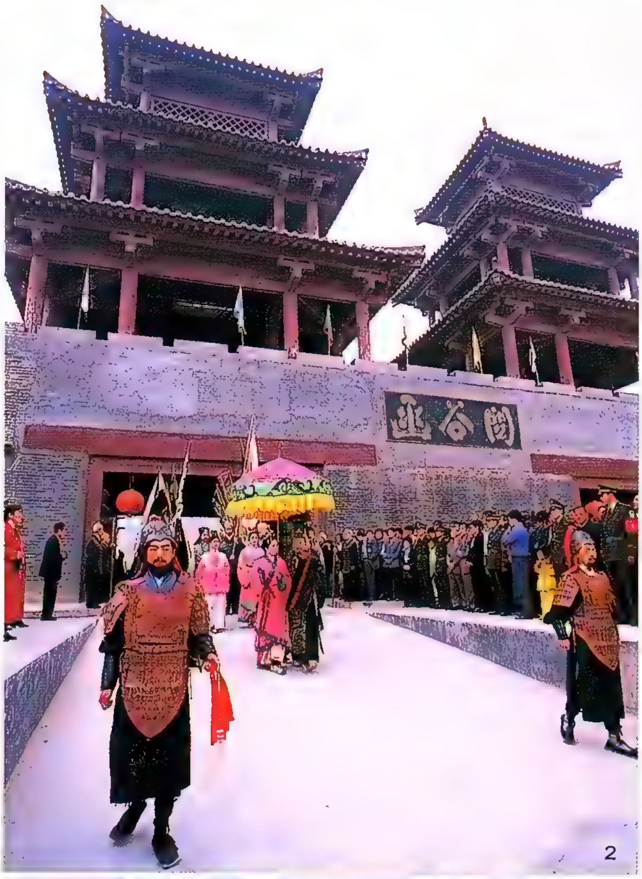
6. Downstream from the reservoir, the current rushes like wild horses and sometimes produce high waves.

Hangu Pass: History and Grandeur

Located 75 kilometres west of Sanmenxia City is Hangu Pass, an impregnable fortress first built in the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.). In ancient times, it was a strategic pass between Luoyang in the east and Chang'an in the west. The Hangu Pass road totals 15 kilometres long and the gorge is 50 to 70 metres deep. The width of the gorge between vertical cliffs varies between two and 10 metres at its bottom. In the years following the Spring and Autumn Period up to the third century quite a few bloody battles were fought by this pass.

A Show of Historical Episodes

When we arrived at Hangu Pass, the nearby Lingbao City was putting on a production of the grand scene where the Qin Emperor passed through Hangu during his East China inspection tour. The local folks dressed in ancient costumes beat the drums and gongs hard, and palace maids sang and danced to extol the good times. We followed the emperor's entourage along the ancient Hangu Pass road, imagining the fierce battle between the Qin army and the other states' allied forces there.



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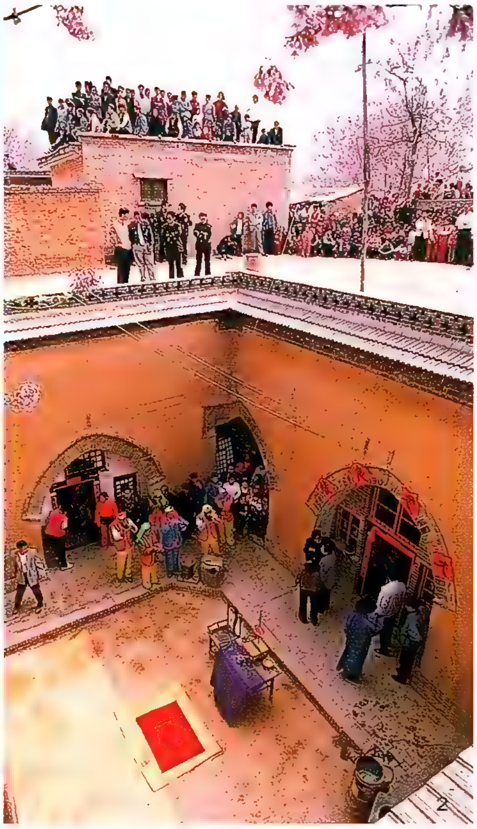
Where Lao Zi Wrote His Book

Taichu Palace, in commemoration of Taoism's founder, Lao Zi, is to the east side of the Hangu Pass gate. Legend says when Lao Zi rode through the pass, Yin Xi, the local magistrate, begged him to stay and write a book for him. Lao Zi stayed and wrote the 5,000-character *Tao Te Ching*. The Taichu Palace is built at the site where Lao Zi wrote the book.

1. **Inside the pass is a narrow gorge flanked by vertical cliffs. In ancient times, many blood battles were fought here.**
2. **"Qin Emperor Exits the Pass" is performed.**
3. **These children start training early. (by Shi Baoxiu)**
4. **Taichu Palace, built with local donations (by Shi Baoxiu)**
5. **Decorations on the door of a house in front of the pass**
6. **Legend says that *Tao Te Ching* was written in Hangu Pass. (by Shi Baoxiu)**

A Wedding in an **Underground Village**



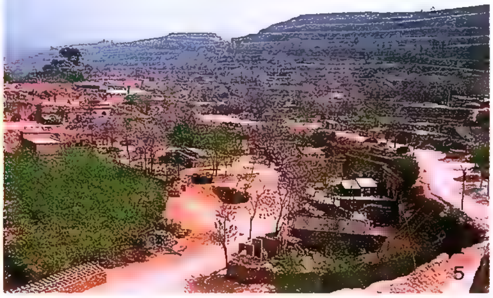
Zhangcun sits on the Loess Plateau and its homes have traditionally been in caves. Although recently some families have put up brick-and-tile buildings on flat ground, most still prefer caves. Upon entering the village, we immediately got a better understanding of the local saying "Seeing the trees but not the village, and entering the village but not seeing the houses."

As we arrived to witness a traditional wedding ceremony, a group of villagers came to fetch the bride. Four of them had three-barreled blunderbusses and two others held gauze lanterns with the characters "double-happiness". The air filled with the sound of drums and gongs as well as *suona* music. A young man in brand new clothes, obviously the bridegroom, rode in on a horse. Behind the musicians, eight people carried a large sedan with its front curtain lowered, obscuring the bride inside.

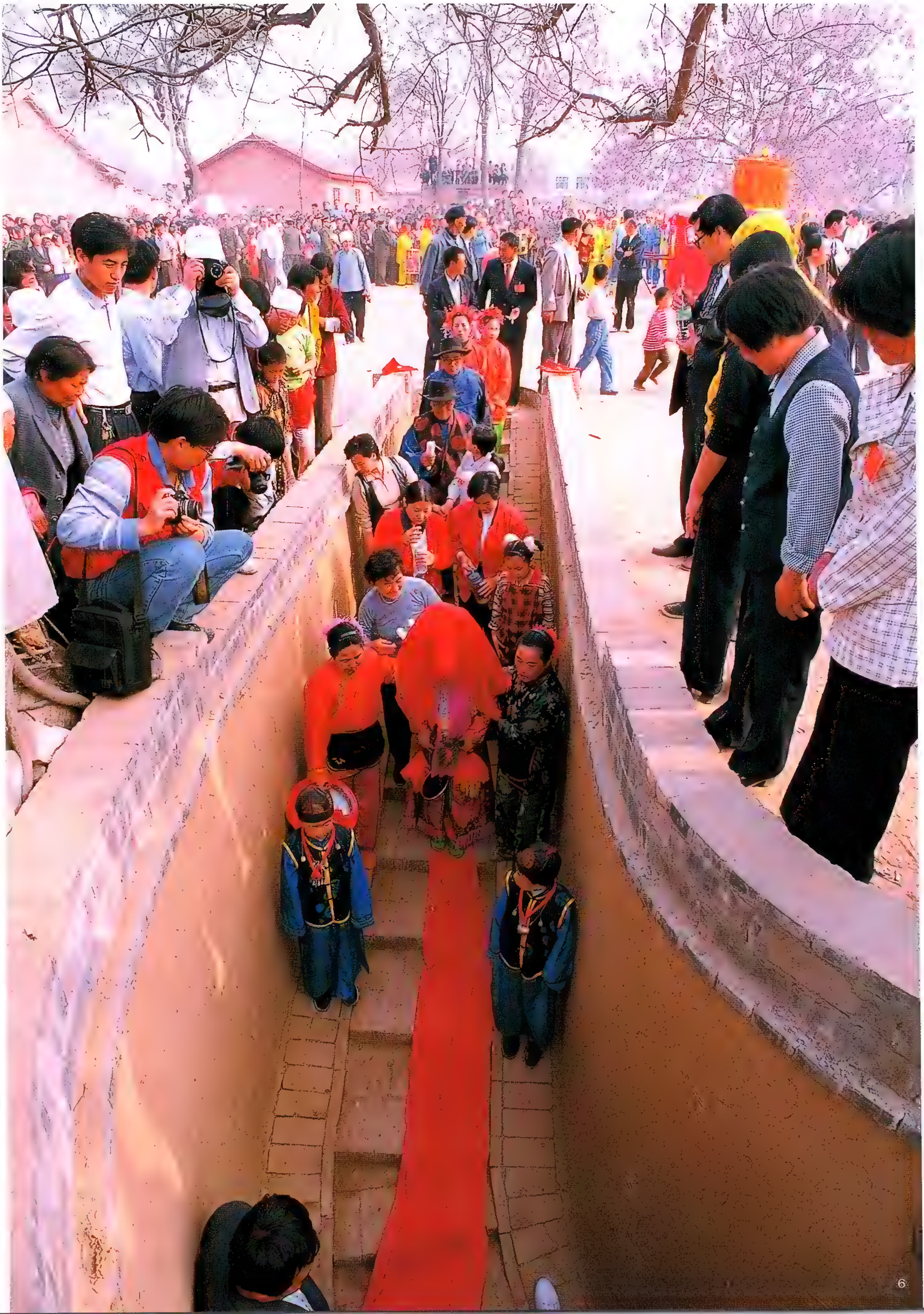
300-year-old Housing Style

The bridal chamber was a typical cave dwelling on the Loess Plateau. The bridegroom, Huanzhi, had five family members of three generations, all living in cave dwellings. Over 300 years ago, his forebears had dug their living caves of this kind here. The pit was about seven metres deep with six caves built on all directions, forming a typical quadrangle. A long sloping path led down into it. Many tourists had stayed there to experience life in cave courtyards.

The courtyard was especially clean and the paper cuts on the windows and brightly coloured door curtains added to the joyful atmosphere. Everyone had put on old-style clothes, appearing very scholarly and refined. In the major cave were the portraits of the family's ancestors and a special long table for the wedding rituals with an incense burner and sweet cakes. A large firecracker went off so the bride and bridegroom arrived for their rituals.



1. The entire village turns out to celebrate joyous occasions.
2. Cave courtyard, one of the oldest type of residences in China
3. In the cave, it is warm in winter and cool in summer, and it reflects the origin of the Chinese term for "bridal chamber".
4. The local drum and gong performance is also unique.
5. The underground village sits on a loess land north of Sanmenxia City.
6. Each cave courtyard has a long sloping path.



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Yellow River Delicacies

When night falls, downtown Sanmenxia City becomes particularly lively. Its special Night Food Street, lined with small restaurants and food stalls offering snacks from all over the country, is always crowded in the warm weather. What most people look for are Shanzhou eggs in fermented rice, Sanmenxia fried dough twist, watery Buddha's-hand sweet cakes, sliced noodles, baked cakes, sesame seed cakes, pebble-baked bread and Guanyintang beef. The most expensive ones cost less than five yuan, but most are only one yuan. You can watch the whole process of preparing these snacks and also make requests for condiments according to your taste. You can even join the cooks.

Yellow River carp banquet

Apart from the snacks, one delicacy not to be missed is the Yellow River "carp banquet". China has numerous varieties of carp and the Yellow River one tastes the best. The Sanmenxia Reservoir abounds in Yellow River carp which has a pinkish mouth and fins, and a golden yellow body. Its tender meat is suitable for cooking in various ways — steamed with clear soup, stewed with soy sauce or deep-fried. In western Henan, there is the saying: "It is no banquet without carp". The major dishes of the banquet include baked noodles with carp, stewed sea cucumber and carp, yellow dragon (carp) in a gold net, as well as carp steamed with clear soup.

Tips

To have a carp banquet, advance orders are accepted at the Friendship Hotel or Jinlian (Gold Sickle) Hotel. The banquet cost ranges from 200 yuan to 500 yuan, depending on the dishes ordered.

Sanmenxia Friendship Hotel: Tel: (398) 282 2222

Gold Sickle Hotel: Tel: (398) 285 5000

Shopping in Sanmenxia

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The Sanmenxia region abounds in native produce, such as Lingbao date, Yangshao yellow apricot, persimmon, Lushi mushroom (*Hedgehog hydnum*), black fungus, pilose antler and wild glossy ganoderma.

Souvenirs include unique Yellow River pebbles, papercuts, Henan cloth tigers, Guozhou inkstones, Yangshao painted pottery and imitation antiques from Guozhou.

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1. Walnuts, dates and mushrooms — famous local produce
2. Imitations of Yangshao ancient pottery wares
3. Yellow River pebble
4. Embroidered shoes worn in western Henan Province
5. Embroidered pillows in the shape of a pig
6. Embroidered pouches — tokens of love in the old days (by Shi Baoxiu)

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7. Local papercuts
8. Inkstones made in Guozhou

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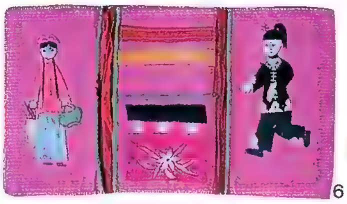
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Tips for Travelling **Sanmenxia**

1. TOURISM PROGRAMMES

• Rafting on the Yellow River

Rafting on the Yellow River is the most exciting programme in summer and autumn. The Sanmenxia Yellow River Travel Co. was the first to launch rafting programmes there, and thus has a sound reputation and good experience. The entire course is over 50 kilometres in length. The section downstream from the Yellow River Dam, over 20 kilometres long, is the most soul-stirring yet perfectly safe.

Charges for individual tourists (groups of 6 or more) are 180 yuan and group tourists (16 or more), 120-150 yuan.

Best rafting season: May to September; Tel: (398) 282 2780.

• Visiting an Underground Village

A cave village is only 15 kilometres from downtown Sanmenxia and special minibuses or air-conditioned coaches are available. Coach rental depends on its size and the time required.

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You can arrange with the local travel agency to stay with a cave family for a couple of days. The local folks are very hospitable and modest. There are no fixed standard charges. They will usually treat guests with traditional local snacks, or prepare some food according to guests' requests. Generally, it costs 100-150 yuan per day.

Best time to visit cave dwellings: spring or autumn; Tel: (398) 282 2780.

• Touring Hangu Pass

Hangu Pass (including Taichu Palace) is 75 kilometres from Sanmenxia City. It takes about one hour to get there by bus and the entry charge is 25 yuan. First take a minibus to Lingbao, then change to another minibus, or take a taxi to get to the pass.

• Boating on the Yellow River

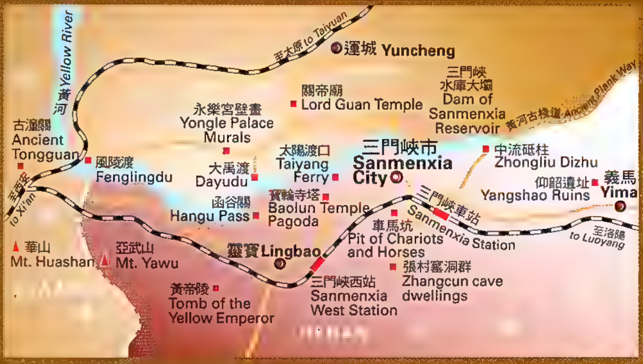
In the Sanmenxia Reservoir area, there are six pleasure-boats with seating for 50-150 people and one double-hull boat. They offer performances by local folk artists, fishing or other recreational activities on board. Westward from the Taiyang Ferry the boat reaches Tongguan in Shaanxi Province, while going eastward you will see the Sanmenxia Yellow River Dam. The boats stop at some points on the way where you can go ashore.

• Tourist Attractions Around Sanmenxia

- **Lord Guan Temple in Yuncheng City, Shanxi Province**: 95 kilometres away, one hour by bus.
- **Pujiu Temple, Shanxi**: 140 kilometres away, three hours by bus.
- **Yongle Palace, Shanxi**: 85 kilometres away, two hours by bus.
- **Hukou Waterfalls on the Yellow River**: 395 kilometres away, eight hours by bus.
- **Yuhuang Mountain Forest Park, Henan Province**: 160 kilometres from downtown Sanmenxia City.
- **Mount Huashan in Shaanxi Province**: 160 kilometres, three hours by bus.
- **Shaolin Temple, Henan Province**: 220 kilometres, five hours by bus.

2. TRANSPORTATION

• Flights and Trains: First fly to Xi'an from various cities in China. Then take the tourist train No. 202 from Xi'an to Sanmenxia. The train departs at 9:21 a.m. and arrives at Sanmenxia at 13:08 p.m.



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• City and Adjacent Areas: From the Sanmenxia Long-distance Bus Station, there are buses to the various counties and districts under its jurisdiction as well as to adjacent areas and cities. Tel: (398) 288 6061.

Downtown taxi charge five yuan for the first three kilometres and then one yuan per kilometre.

3. ACCOMMODATION

In Sanmenxia City, there are choices of all sorts of hotels and hostels.

- **Yellow River Mansion**: 100-138 yuan for standard room; Tel: (398) 282 2217.
- **Huangjin (Gold) Hotel**: 160-200 yuan for standard room; Tel: (398) 282 3708.
- **Yancao (Tobacco) Mansion**: 200 yuan for standard room; Tel: (398) 282 3737.
- **Friendship Hotel**: 135-180 yuan for standard room; Tel: (398) 282 2222.
- **Sanmenxia Dapeng International Hotel**: 430-560 yuan for standard room; Tel: (398) 289 8088.
- **Yangshao Holiday Village**: 80-120 yuan for standard room; Tel: (398) 481 4835.

Translated by Z.G. Li

1. A burial pit of chariots and horses for a prince of the State of Guo in the Spring and Autumn Period (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. A cave hotel (by Shi Baoxiu)
3. Baolun Temple pagoda, one of four echoing architectures in ancient China (by Shi Baoxiu)

3

ANCIENT PAPER-MAKING TECHNIQUE

— A VISIT TO DENGCUN TOWN

Photos & article by Hua Nian

The story of China's 2,000-year-old paper-making technique, improved by Cai Lun of Eastern Han Dynasty, is taught to all school children. This technique was not mastered by central Asians until 300 years later. It was introduced to Europe in the 12th century and to North America in the 17th century.

A Paper-making Village Attracts Tourists

While in Guangdong Province, I learned that the Town of Dengcun in Sihui was still using the ancient technique of 2,000 years ago to make paper. Ninety percent of the 2,000 households in the town make their living by paper-making.

I was very curious since modern technology produces high quality and large quantities of paper nowadays. Why are these people still using an old method to make low-quality paper? The reason is simple:

this paper is used to make paper money for sacrificial ceremonies in the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong, Macau and Southeast Asia. As the paper is made in Sihui, it is widely known as Hui paper and Dengcun is also known as the "First Village of China's Hui Paper".

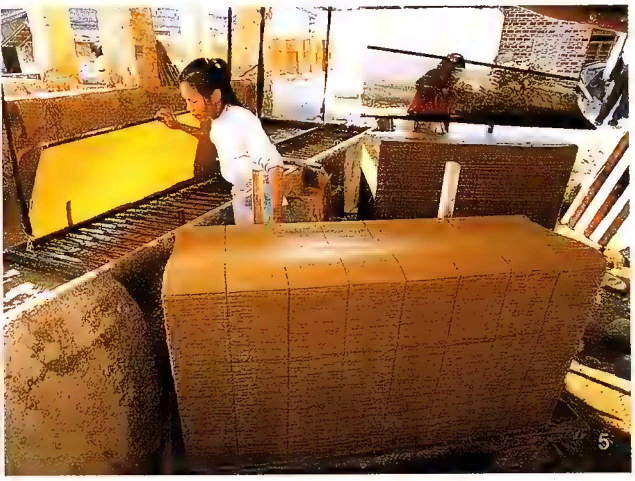
I decided to grab the chance to see for myself. On the way to Dengcun, I saw piles of paper being dried along the country road. Bamboo was also piled high on the hill, and filled the fields and village. Several bus-loads of visitors swamped the village at the same time. Ever since Dengcun became known to tourists, this remote mountain village has become very busy. Schools in nearby cities and counties also regard Dengcun as a "classroom" for teaching history and natural science. Students lined up to see the paper-making process as recorded in the ancient science book *Exploitation of the Works of Nature*. The interesting thing is that what we saw there was almost the same as recorded in that book's 13th volume.

The Exploitation of Nature

An abundance of bamboo in the Pearl River Delta means that it serves as the raw material for making paper. It is called "bamboo paper" in the *Exploitation of the Works of Nature*. The workshops in Dengcun are based on households and all the family members are involved. The villagers first cut the bamboo into short lengths and soak them in a lime pond. It usually takes four to five months of soaking to make the bamboo fibres soft. The soaked bamboo is then put into clean water for another month to get rid of lime and other impurities. After that it is dried in the sun. A machine is used to crush the bamboo, though we learned that 20 years ago the villagers still used a waterwheel. The crushed bamboo is put into a pond to be made into pulp. According to the records, the pulp should be steamed before making paper but since Hui paper is deliberately made as rough paper, this process is omitted.

The next step is the draining process, the key process for making paper. A mould made with very fine bamboo threads is used for this, though now some workshops have changed to plastic ones. The mould is dipped into the pulp water and then with

1. In Dengcun, every space is covered by paper.
2. As recorded in ancient times, bamboo is the raw material for making paper here.
3. Paper articles used in sacrificial ceremonies are mostly produced with the original paper-making technique.
4. Bamboo is first soaked in a lime pond for four or five months.
5. A process of paper-making – draining



a shake, pulled up. As water filters through the mould, a layer of pulp remains on top which becomes a piece of paper after drying. The paper's thickness is determined by the way the mould is shaken: a gentle shake makes thin paper and a hard shake makes it thick. Then, a flip of the mould, quickly and precisely, turns the new sheet out onto the increasing pile of paper. I saw a few thousand sheets piled high and neat like a wall. This unfinished paper is then put into a squeezing machine to squeeze out the water. The paper is left there to dry naturally before going onto the next step of loosening.

Loosening means separating the paper sheets which stick together. The worker beats the unfinished paper with a specially-made wooden board with his right hand while turning the sheets with his left hand. This requires great skill, otherwise the sheets will be torn. Apprentices need a few years to master the skills of draining and loosening.

The next step is sunning the paper. According to *Exploitation of the Works of Nature*, fine paper should be dried in an oven, but Hui paper can be dried in the sun. So visitors may see a unique scene of paper being sunned in every open space in the village .

The Hui paper is actually a half-finished product. It is packed and shipped to different places for printing or further processing into products such as paper ingots or wrapping paper. I saw some

2

Before China invented paper-making, people used tortoise-shell, bones, stone, metal, bamboo or wooden strips, tree bark, cloth and silk, or leather to keep records, but they were very inconvenient. The ancient Egyptians first made papyrus paper, but, being a difficult process, it was very precious and used only by nobles. With the making of paper from plant fibre came greater cultural exchange and literacy among common people. According to archaeological findings, China first made paper from hemp in the 2nd century B.C., then from tree bark and cloth. According to historical records, in the year 105 in the mid-Han Dynasty, Cai Lun proposed to the emperor to use tree bark, hemp ends, worn cloth or torn fishing nets to make paper, and thus developed the technique. After 1150, the Europeans started to make paper; in 1690 paper mills began to appear in North America.

women in Dengcun doing the paper ingot processing themselves.

After a half-day's visit, students may try their hand at making a piece of paper. Visitors like me can visit a paper-making exhibition in the village's primary school, which reinforced my knowledge of this ancient Chinese invention I had just witnessed.

1. **Trimming the house-made paper**
2. **Separating the piled up paper piece by piece requires well-trained skills.**
3. **Making paper ingots which are used in sacrificial ceremonies**
4. **Children are also helpful in the family paper mills.**
5. **The paper to be shipped to Hong Kong, Macau and Southeast Asian countries**

Tips for the Traveller

Transport: Sihui can be reached by special-route bus from Guangzhou, Zhaoqing and Sanshui. From Sihui, minibuses take you to Dengcun Town.

Shopping: Sihui Shatang oranges, jade and soy bean paste, and Tea Oil Chicken.

Entertainment: Zhenshan Scenic Area and Water Amusement World in Zhenshan.

Food: Freshwater food from Xijiang and Beijiang rivers at Mafang. Famous Sihui dishes include Zhuhou Goose and Tea Oil Chicken.

Accommodation: Zhenshan Hotel (three-star) and Longcheng Hotel (two-star).

Special tours in Zhaoqing and Sihui (for reference only)

One-day tour:

Arrive at Sihui in the morning, visit paper-making in Dengcun, have lunch there; in the afternoon, visit Zhenshan Scenic Area and Jade Market (may taste orange if during the Orange Festival).

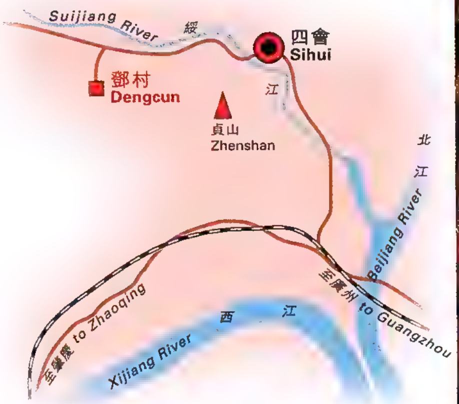
Two-day tour:

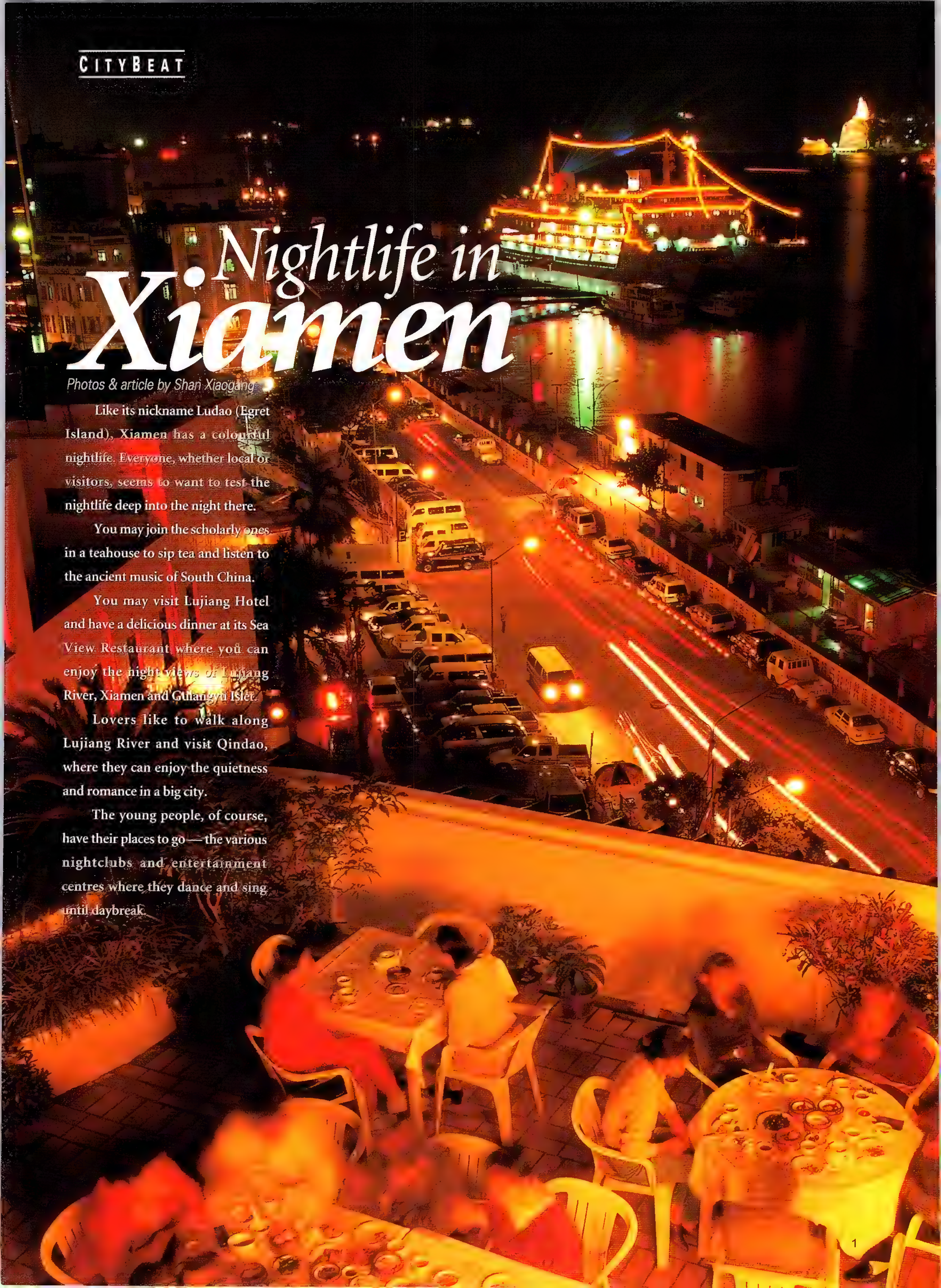
Day 1: The same as above. After dinner visit night market and Jade Market; overnight in Sihui.

Day 2: After breakfast, go to Zhaoqing to visit the Seven-Star Cave and Mount Dinghu.

Contacts: Zhaoqing Guotai Tourist Agency: Tel (758) 282 2000/283 3228-7777 or 5555);

Jiangwan Huanyu Holiday Co. of Guangzhou: Tel (20) 8386 9768.





Nightlife in Xiamen

Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang

Like its nickname Ludao (Egret Island), Xiamen has a colourful nightlife. Everyone, whether local or visitors, seems to want to test the nightlife deep into the night there.

You may join the scholarly ones in a teahouse to sip tea and listen to the ancient music of South China.

You may visit Lujiang Hotel and have a delicious dinner at its Sea View Restaurant where you can enjoy the night views of Lujiang River, Xiamen and Gulangyu Islet.

Lovers like to walk along Lujiang River and visit Qindao, where they can enjoy the quietness and romance in a big city.

The young people, of course, have their places to go — the various nightclubs and entertainment centres where they dance and sing until daybreak.

A Great Place for Tea

The tea ceremony of southern Fujian is known the world over, with Gongfu Tea as the best. In Xiamen you may enjoy the wonderful tea culture of southern Fujian and experience the descriptive saying that "tea creates a big world, and time stretches in a tea pot."

It is very convenient to drink Gongfu Tea in Xiamen. After shopping in downtown, walk to the Zhongshan Street. Drop into a teahouse where a lady in southern Fujian costume will come up to you, inviting you to sit down by a carved tree-root tea table and offering you a cup of tea. She may explain various things about tea and answer your questions. If the boss is in the shop, he or she may sit with you, sipping tea and exchanging views about self-cultivation and longevity. Or you could also go to the Tea Culture Centre to enjoy the tea ceremony performed by "tea ladies", listen to stories about tea and tea customs in southern Fujian, and, more importantly, taste the tea according to the proper procedure.

Information

Tea shop: Baoshan Tea Shop at 28 Zhongshan Road. Its boss, Mr. Xiao Guangqian, has deep knowledge of the tea ceremony of southern Fujian.

The Tea Culture Centre is situated in Xiamen University. The fee is 50 yuan per person; Tel: 209 8138.

1. Lujiang Hotel's Sea View Restaurant is a nice place to enjoy the night view of Xiamen.
2. Having tea at the Baoshan Tea Shop
3. Tasting Tieguanyin tea produced in nearby Anxi
4. In a tea shop, tourists can observe Gongfu Tea demonstration and exchange tea ceremony experiences.

Food Delicacies to Tempt Everyone

Xiamen snacks are historically famous, totalling over 200 varieties, including the pyramid-shaped rice dumpling stuffed with pork, fish ball soup, shrimp noodles, thin cake, taro dumpling and fried oysters.

There are several well-known snack shops. Huangzehe Peanut Soup Shop, on Zhongshan Road, is easily accessible while doing your shopping. Wuzaitian Snack Shop, on Datong Road, offers over 40 varieties, such as pyramid-shaped rice dumpling stuffed with pork, taro dumpling, and fried dough. Haoqingxiang Restaurant, on Hubin Road Central, is Xiamen's most famous restaurant serving dozens of southern Fujian snacks, as well as famous Xiamen dishes.

For a more modern style, visit the Marco Polo Oriental Hotel at night. In the lobby, the band plays romantic and sentimental music; its restaurants offer Western, Japanese and Chinese food, each in a different atmosphere.

The Hollywood Bar in the Holiday Sea View Hotel is decorated in pure Hollywood style and shows free Hollywood classic films. In the hotel's restaurants, you may eat genuine American hamburgers, hot-dogs, barbecued beef and pork chops, or classic seafood dishes in Italian styles, such as garlic shrimps, eel fried with olive oil and seafood soup.

Information

Huangzehe Peanut Soup Shop: 22 Zhongshan Road; opening hours: 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Wuzaitian Snack Shop: 49 Datong Road; opening hours: 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Haoqingxiang Restaurant: 85 Hubin Road Central; opening hours: 7 a.m.-12 p.m. Marco Polo Oriental Hotel: 8 Jianye Road, Hubin Road North; Tel: (590) 509 1888. Holiday Sea View Hotel: 12-8 Zhenhai Road; Tel: (592) 202 3333.

1. Inside the Hollywood Bar
2. Wenzhao Huicheng Shopping Centre in the new area is considered as the "City of Nightlife". (by Zou Zhengang)

The Entertainment Scene

In Xiamen there are plentiful places to go for modern entertainment programmes. Youfu Castle is one of them.

The very large Disco Hall in Youfu Castle has a ground floor with suspended seats on its circular corridor, which look very romantic under candle light. The railed second floor offers a good view and the booths on the outer circle are very quiet. At 6 p.m. a buffet is served daily, and at 9 p.m. a song and dance performance is staged. Guests can sing and dance at any other time.

Baolong Entertainment City is luxuriously equipped and attracts young people. At 11 p.m. there is a beer-drinking competition, followed by a song and dance performance, and fashion show. Wanshi Entertainment Centre has a song and dance performance, and fashion show every night, suitable for all ages. There are 20 other large entertainment centres including Lugang, Diwang, Qiangui, Jueshi and Huangchao.

Information

Youfu Castle: Tel: (592) 512 9518; Disco Hall ticket: 30 yuan; opening hours: 6 p.m.-6 a.m.

Wanshi Entertainment Centre: Tel: (592) 207 3599.

Baolong Entertainment City: 3rd floor of Baolong Centre, Jiahe Road; Tel: (592) 512 8156.

1. **A fashion show on Gulangyu Islet (by Zou Zhengang)**
2. **At 9 p.m. every evening, Youfu Castle stages dance performances.**

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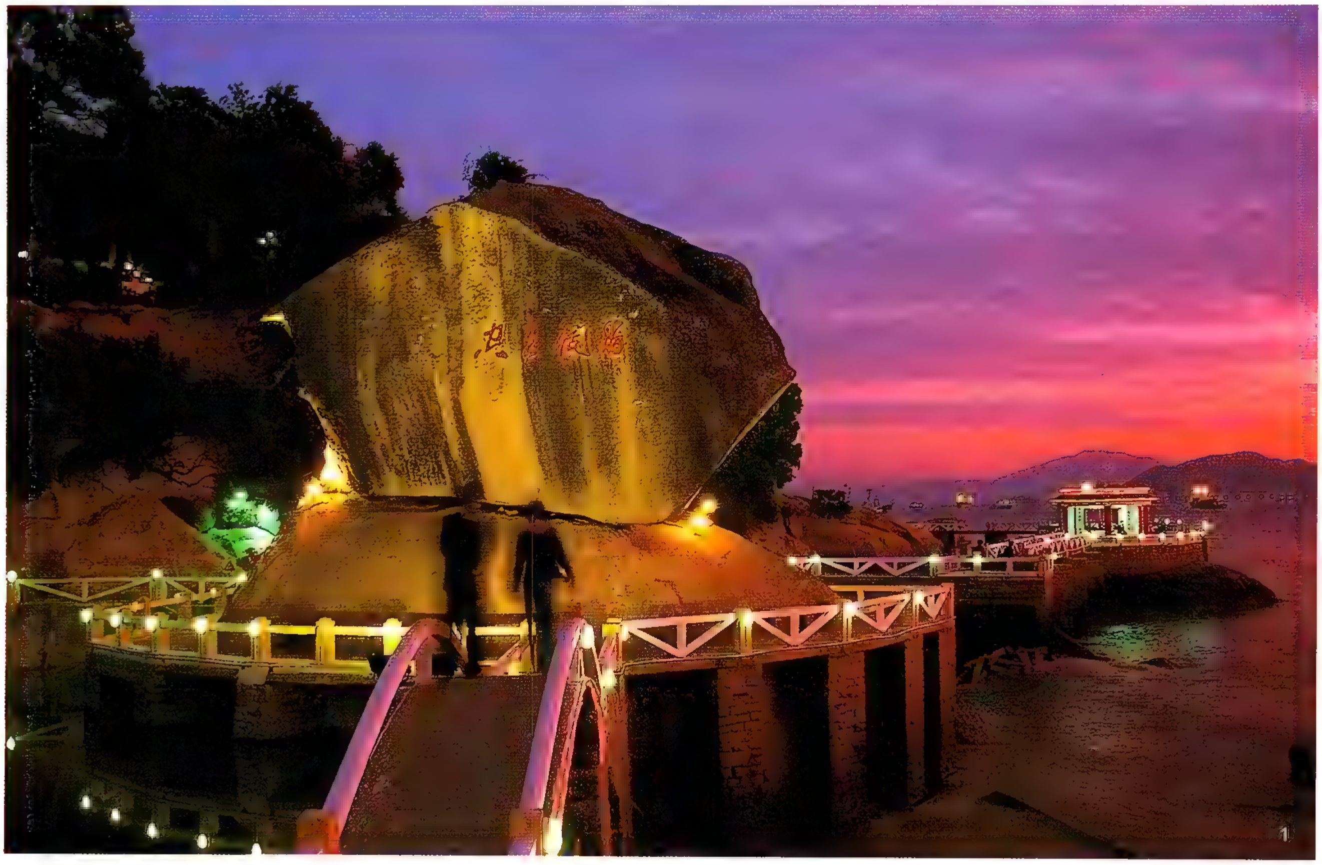
Charming Night Scenes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Ludao (Egret Island) is the ancient name of Xiamen. Lujiang River is not a river but the strait between Xiamen Island and Gulangyu Islet. The banks of Lujiang are always thronged with visitors, locals and tourists, and their night scenes are extremely beautiful.

You can enjoy the sunset and night views on board a boat while tasting the food of Fujian and Taiwan. Lujiang Hotel, with its top-floor open-air restaurant, stands by the river bank. The recently-opened White Egret Islet Park on the beach has sculptures of various themes, a musical fountain with dancing lights and an expanse of greenery. The modern building, People's Hall, stands to the north of the lake, and a shopping centre is located at the east end of the park. Sightseeing and shopping can be easily combined.

The best place for nightlife in Xiamen is Gulangyu

2

3

Islet, which is known as the "Garden on the Sea". Coloured lights sit amongst the rocks and between scenic spots there, making the whole islet resemble a colourful, bejewelled dragon floating on the sea. Taking a ferry from Xiamen to Gulangyu Islet, you arrive at the Sea World and Eight Diagram Tower. Turning left from the ferry terminus, you can enjoy the sculpture of Zheng Chenggong and his generals in the Moon Garden. There is another huge stone sculpture of Zheng on Fuding Rock.

The market street on Longtou Road that connects with the ferry terminus is brightly lit every night and provides good shopping for tourists. Local and special products and handicrafts of southern Fujian and Xiamen are sold in 100 or so shops there.

Information

Ferries between Xiamen and Gulangyu: run 24 hours; more boats at rush hours. Fare: ground deck, one yuan; upper deck, 1.5 yuan. Tea and other drinks are served at minimal charge.

Gulangyu Islet night lights hours: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. (varies seasonally).

Gulangyu Concert Hall on Longtou Road: Evening concerts often held at 7:30 p.m.

White Egret Islet Park: Free entry; Bus No. 23 goes there from the ferry. Taxi fare is 7-8 yuan. The musical fountain show time is 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. There are various folk performances in the park square during festivals and weekends.

Lujiang Hotel: 54 Lujiang Avenue.

Xiamen Hotel: 16 Huyuan Road; Tel: (592) 202 2267.

1. The charming night scene on a Gulangyu beach
2. Dating under the banyan trees
3. At night, the sculpture of Zheng Chenggong is brightly lit.
4. A campers' tent by a beach on Gulangyu Islet
5. A fruit shop in Xiamen
6. The colourful musical fountain at White Egret Islet Park

The Jinling Buddhist Press was established in 1866 during the Qing Dynasty by the great Buddhist master, Yang Renshan. It changed its location several times. One day in 1901, the 64-year-old Yang Renshan called his three sons together and signed a document to divide up family property among his sons. They decided to change the more than 60 rooms of their living quarters into shops for engraving, printing and thread-binding Buddhist scriptures. This is today's Jinling Buddhist Press.

THE JINLING BUDDHIST PRESS OF NANJING

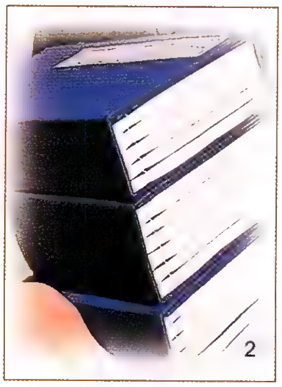
Photos & article by Xie Guanghui

It was a hot summer afternoon in Nanjing. The rays of the scalding sun penetrated the thick tree leaves to shine on the dark asphalt road. Heat waves rolled on the streets, where few vehicles and pedestrians passed by. Cicadas, hiding themselves in the tree branches, sounded their long, monotonous drone throughout the otherwise tranquil and peaceful city streets and lanes. After walking a few streets, I came to the Jinling Buddhist Press on Huaihai Road.

The Jinling Editions Considered the Best

After passing through the gate archway, where the white wall strikingly contrasts with the black tile roof, and walking past a quiet, exquisite courtyard, I came to the Shenliutang (Deep Willow Hall), where Yang Renshan lived and gave lectures. The hall was dimly lit, but the cool air was permeated with a faint scent of printing ink. Along the walls of the hall stood 38 bookcases filled with the long-lost Buddhist classical books of the Song, Ming and Qing dynasties as well as the Buddhist scriptures, pictures and books the Jinling Buddhist Press printed in the past century. Many of the classics, in Brahman, Pali, or Burmese, or of Pattra-Leaf Scripture, were recovered from abroad with the help of Yang's Japanese friends. The rare Buddhist pictures, such as *The Linshan Ceremonial Service*, *Western Paradise* and *The Boy Avalokitesvara*, in addition to the 17 blocks of the Buddha's images kept in the hall, are excellent pieces of art and the only extant ones in China today. Other Buddhist works and references include the Tang-dynasty eminent monk Xuan Zang's translations and writings, *Sutra of One Hundred Parables* engraved and printed with the money donated by Lu Xun in 1914, and *Outline of Tri-pitaka* collated and published by the Jinling Buddhist Press in recent years.

According to Xu Wei of the Jinling Buddhist Press, Yang Renshan was very strict in selecting and printing Buddhist scriptures. He had regulations for three "refrains", namely, "refrain from printing disputed and fake books; refrain from printing meagre and vulgar books; and refrain from printing superstitious books." So, all the Buddhist scriptures produced by the Jinling Buddhist Press were not only strictly chosen but also exquisitely block-printed. Previously, most Buddhist scriptures printed elsewhere were just reproductions, without careful proof-reading or corrections, and without punctuation and paragraphs, so readers found them hard to read. But the Jinling Buddhist Press editions were very accurate and were thus considered as the authentic versions in the Buddhist circles.



A Master Who Vitalised Buddhism

Through Yang Renshan's painstaking work, the Jinling Buddhist Press had, by the beginning of this century, printed and distributed over 1,000,000 volumes of Buddhist scriptures and 100,000 Buddhist pictures and collected 1,440 varieties of Buddhist books, including many published during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It had become the centre of modern Buddhism and had a strong influence on the Chinese intelligentsia of the time. Just as Liang Qichao wrote in his *Comments on Qing-dynasty Learning*: "Almost all of the so-called new-style scholars of late-Qing are connected with Buddhism, and all true Buddhist believers lead the literary associations."

"Since Yang Renshan made an outstanding contribution to the rejuvenation of Chinese Buddhist culture, he was considered a master of great learning and integrity in vitalising Buddhism in modern times," Xu Wei told me as he led me out of the Deep Willow Hall. Yang died in the autumn of 1911. In accordance with his last will that his "coffin be put where the Buddhist scriptures are", he was buried in a tower that was built for him between the Deep Willow Hall and Buddhist Scripture Storeroom.

Walking further on, we entered the hall where 125,000 scripture boards were housed. Before the 1950s, there were only 40,000 scripture boards housed here. Later, the government gathered scripture boards from all parts of the country and housed them here, so that the total increased remarkably. In recent years the government allocated special funds to build this spacious, bright, well-appointed Scripture Board Hall. I saw that all the shelves are new and every scripture board has a new label.

In June 1984, Zhao Rulan, Yang Renshan's granddaughter who spent her childhood here and who is now a professor of Harvard University in the United States, arrived with her husband to visit her family house. When she saw the Jinling Buddhist Press was in such a good condition, she was very happy. "The fact that this Buddhist press, established by my grandfather, has been well-preserved shows that China values its Buddhist cultural heritage very much," she said.

China's Only Wood-block Buddhist Printing House

In the block-cutting shop, a few young girls were in deep concentration doing their engravings under a table lamp. Under their hands, Song-typeface characters neatly cut in intaglio came out one after another. One of the engravers told me: "In cutting the blocks, you cannot make the slightest mistake. One tiny error and the whole block is spoilt." Not daring to ask her any more questions for fear of interfering with her work, I left for the printing and binding shop, where I found the art of traditional Chinese printing was still employed. *Xuan* paper and writing paper made from bamboo were used there, and wood engraving and water-colour block printing and traditional thread binding were maintained. Buddhist scripture books produced in such traditional methods looked very elegant and tasteful.

The printers said that Buddhist believers all love to have the books produced by traditional methods. After they restored the wood-block printing of Buddhist scriptures in 1981, over several million copies of 200 titles have been printed. Meanwhile, they have repaired a large number of moth-eaten, mouldy or damaged scripture books.

Today, the Jinling Buddhist Press has become a centre of block printing in the Chinese language in China. Not only does it print a large number of Buddhist scripture books in bright colours, exquisite designs and large distinct characters that are pleasing to the eye, it also has on hand a whole set of traditional techniques such as China's ancient wood engraving, water-colour block printing and thread binding. This is a phenomenon that helps carry on the traditional culture, but is rarely seen in other places these days.

The Jinling Buddhist Press is the only institution for block printing and distributing Buddhist scriptures in China. The Buddhist scripture books and pictures it produces have an excellent reputation both in China and abroad. Buddhist believers and researchers from many other countries and regions have come to visit. Yamada Keipei of the famous Japanese Tendai School once paid a special visit to this institute. Libraries and research institutions of over a dozen countries worldwide, as well as famous temples, both in China and abroad, all send people to buy scripture books from Jinling.

When I asked about their future plans, Xu Wei answered, "The Jinling Buddhist Press is characterised by combining scripture printing with the study of Buddhism. This is the main reason why the versions of Buddhist scriptures it prints are of high quality and enjoy great popularity. We plan to strengthen the research of Buddhist scriptures and publish a dozen more scripture books to satisfy the demands from Buddhist believers and supporters all over the world."

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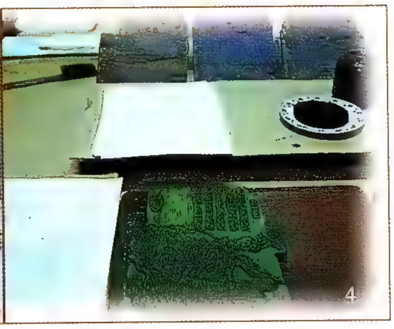

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Translated by Xiong Zhenru

1. **Every wood block and every page of scriptures must be dealt with meticulous care.**
2. **The Jinling Buddhist Press' Buddhist scripture books and pictures have a strong reputation both in China and abroad.**
3. **The Jinling Buddhist scripture books feature bright colours, exquisite designs and large distinct characters that are pleasing to the eye.**
4. **Traditional techniques such as wood engraving, water-colour block printing and thread binding remain at the Jinling Buddhist Press.**

Editor's Note: The Mulan Hunting Ground in Hebei Province, also called Bashang, once served as the hunting ground for the Qing imperial court (1644-1911). Bordering Inner Mongolia, the Bashang terrain features sharp rises and falls as well as thick forests, in which wild animals and fowls abound.

Last autumn, a group of photographers made a trip to Bashang for "autumn hunting", seeking photos of its splendid autumn scenes. They also recorded the locations of different autumn scenes and grazing herds of cows, sheep and horses, in the hope that other photography buffs could follow their footsteps.

Hunting for Autumn

At Bashang

Photos by Chan Yat Nin Article by Li Ping

The fortnight from late September to early October is the prime time of autumn in Bashang. Each year, Bashang is jammed with photographers from all over the country. They are the "autumn hunters" armed with all brands of cameras.

In previous years, I had gone to Bashang to take pictures each year, and thus was regarded by friends as an "old horse that knows the way". Last year, we formed an "autumn hunting" group and drove to Bashang again.

September 21 Beijing to Jinshanling

We gathered enough supplies for a week, and set out by jeep at 6:30 a.m. to drive directly northward to the Jinshanling Great Wall.

A pastureland at Xiaohetou Village in the Hongshan Army Horse Farm (70-200mm/F2.8 zoom, RVP50 slide, 1/30 second, 5.6 aperture)

It is hard to drive all the way to Bashang in one day, so Jinshanling has become the ideal stopover. The afternoon we arrived at Jinshanling, we climbed up the western section and directed our cameras eastward. It was a clear day and the light was marvellous for photos. In the viewfinder, the Great Wall appeared like a serpentine, dancing dragon. We took pictures with both 135mm and 120mm cameras, and found the best camera for such views is the one for 6x12mm pictures.

September 22 Jinshanling to Bashang

Today we went to take pictures of the eastern part of Jinshanling Great Wall in the morning sun, but unfortunately, it was misty. Rarely does fine weather last more than one day here.

After lunch at the seat of Weichang (Hunting Ground) County, we filled up the tank and bought fruits and pastries for picnics on the grassland. We also bought some Great Wall dry red wine to go with the beef and mutton, the principal food to have at Bashang.

As the highway was being resurfaced, it was extremely bumpy and we only arrived in Bashang at dusk. Bashang actually refers to the plateau that rises suddenly to over 1,000 metres above sea level from the North China Plain. This suddenly rising ridge resembles a high dam, from which the name Bashang, meaning "on top of the dam", arises.

The golden forest in Huamu Gully (120 camera, 150mm/F4.5 zoom, RVP50 slide, 1/60 second, 5.6-8 aperture)

The scene at Bashang was indeed splendid. Most of the forest and grassland had already turned into patches of golden yellow and orange red. This part of Bashang in Weichang County is also called Mulan Hunting Ground. Bordering Hebei Province and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, its proper name is Sahanba State Forest Park. It includes a forest farm, the Yudaokou Pastureland and the Hongshan Army Horse Farm. Most tourists usually stay in the forest farm's holiday village, while the photographers prefer lodging in the pastureland or army horse farm.

A herd of galloping horses (70-200mm/F2,8 zoom, RDP II 100 slide, 1/125 second, 5.6 aperture)

We chose the newly-built No. 2 Hostel of the army horse farm. All the rooms were doubles, with a toilet and hot water. This was beyond my expectation.

September 23 The Big Gorge and Yujia Hill

We set out for Yujia Hill and the Big Gorge at 6:30 a.m. As it was a little hazy, we could only make selections of sites for photos later. Unexpectedly, we found a small lake (called *paozi*) at the back of Yujia Hill. Water from the lake formed an S-shaped stream on the green grassland. It turned out to be an ideal place for pictures. We hurriedly drove to a nearby village to beg the folk herdsmen to bring their ox herds there. It was an exciting beginning.

In the afternoon, we returned to the hostel early because of the drizzle.

September 24 Xida Pao and a New Pond

Again, we set out at 6:30 a.m., this time to Xida Pao (Great West Lake). On the way, we passed a large grove of white birch, near which a herd of horses were grazing. The view was unique and

Hunting for autumn colours at Bashang

we had to stop for pictures. The scenery in Xida Pao is not as natural as it was a year ago. Construction of tourism facilities was going on at the lakeside. Nevertheless, we did take some good pictures. We saw many people who had arrived before sunrise to take pictures of the lake with a thin layer of fog floating over it.

Xida Pao is relatively large and the water is sapphire blue. During our lunchtime picnic in the woods we unexpectedly found a new *paozi*. With white birch trees around it and a gently rising and falling terrain, it was a good background for pictures of grazing herds of horses and sheep. By chance, we met a young herdsman named Li and invited him to bring his herd of horses there to be our "models". He found himself an assistant and the two drove the horses to and fro as we desired. We were so excited with the events that we took pictures till it turned dark.

Still, we begged the two young men to come again at noon the next day.

September 25 Yuanbao Hill and Luosi Pao

Birds looking for food around animals' pens (70-200mm/F2.8 zoom, RDP II 100 slide, 1/25 second, 5.6 aperture)

In the morning, we took pictures of the yellow autumn forest on the slope behind the Xiaohetou Village at the foot of Yuanbao Hill. By noon we got to Xida Pao and found that lots of yesterday's golden leaves had fallen. Li was already there with his herd. Moreover, he had asked his parents to drive their flock of sheep there as well. With great patience, they "posed" for us.

We called this nameless pond Luosi (Screw) Pao because one of my friends lost and then found the screw for his tripod there.

September 26 The East Line — Birch Gully

At 5:30 a.m., we set out and drove several dozen kilometres eastward to Huamu (Birch) Gully, because the

Luosi Pao is surrounded by luxuriant woods and grass (70-200mm/F2.8 zoom, EPR64 slide, 1/125 second, 5.6 aperture).

yellow colours had spread there. As its name suggests, the valley is full of birch trees. On the way, we saw herds of horses and oxen now and then, and the entire scene was exceptionally beautiful. Eventually, we focused our attention on taking pictures of landscapes, without "models" today. The carefree oxen and horses became a perfect natural adornment.

The clear and gem-like water of Xida Pao (70-200mm/F2.8 zoom, RVP50 slide, 1/125 second, 5.6-8 aperture)

September 27 The West Line — Xiaohetou Village and Mogu Pao

We arrived at Xiaohetou Village before sunrise to take pictures of kitchen smoke in the morning sun and grassland in morning light. Then, we drove further westward to the Mogu (Mushroom) Pao.

Mogu Pao is a fairly large lake and around it are large tracts of grassland. At noon, many herds of horses, oxen and sheep gathered to drink water and rest. This gave us lots of opportunities, yet we still decided to play our old trick again – asking the herdsmen to drive their animals, sometimes into the lake, to create the atmosphere we desired.

September 28 Yujia Hill and the Big Gorge

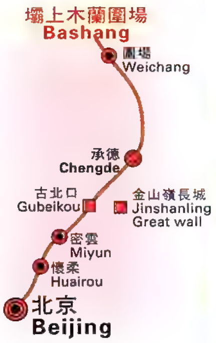
Today we went to Yujia Hill and the Big Gorge to see what we missed on our first visit. The trees on Yujia Hill were colourful and it lived up to its nickname, "Wucai (Five-Colour) Hill". The Big Gorge is actually a deep gully on the grassland with various sorts of trees growing luxuriantly. At its bottom is a stream and on top a desert with sand dunes. The unique landscape made us squander away lots of film.

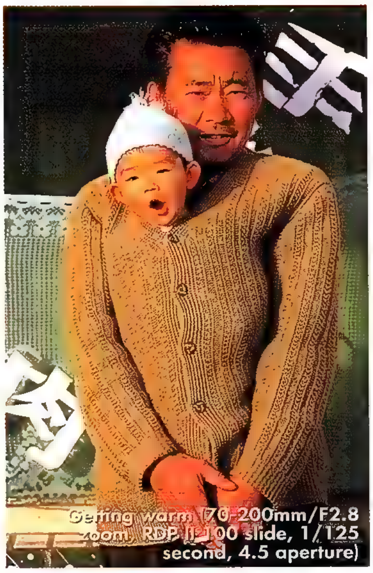
As the National Day on October 1 approached, the autumn photo-taking at Bashang would reach its climax. But the golden yellow colour was subsiding, the weather suddenly changed and fallen leaves were flying. Apparently, snow was coming soon. Happily, we bid farewell to Bashang before other "autumn hunters" swarmed in.

Translated by Li Zhenguo

Tips for the Traveller

1. With your own transport, there are two ways to get to Bashang. One route is Beijing-Miyun-Chengde-Longhua-Weichang-Bashang, a total distance of about 500 kilometres. The other is Beijing-Huairou-Fengning-Guoyongtun-Pailou-Yudaokou-Bashang, totaling 400 kilometres. Yet, half the second route is earthen and makes the trip rough and longer. To go by train, take train No. 557 at 20:23 from Xizhimen Railway Station in Beijing which arrives at Siheyong, Hebei, at 03:42 the next day. Then at Siheyong change to a minibus to the seat of Weichang County (3 yuan), and from there take a bus to Bashang (15 yuan). From the Weichang county seat to Bashang, there are five buses daily. For small groups, it's best to rent a 202 Jeep (daily cost: 200-300 yuan). This way, you can stop anywhere, anytime to rest and take pictures. There are three trains daily returning to Beijing from Siheyong. The No. 194 train departs at 19:05; the No. 558 at 03:48; and the No. 560 at 23:32.
2. The accommodation at Bashang is not very good, but it is quite clean. For a four-bed room, the cost per person is around 30 yuan. Usually, there is no toilet in the room.
3. The temperature can be low. Even in early autumn, you need wool sweaters and trousers.
4. Finding places to eat at Bashang is not difficult, but the prices are exorbitant. For instance, a roasted whole sheep costs 1,200-1,500 yuan.

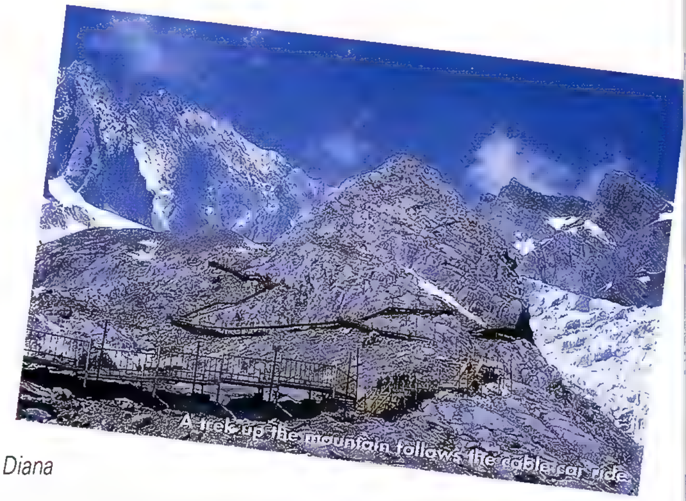



Getting warm (70-200mm/F2.8 zoom, RDP II-100 slide, 1/125 second, 4.5 aperture)

The heat and humidity of summer in Hong Kong made me yearn for the cool and white scenery of Snowy Yulong Mountain in Lijiang.

LIJIANG:
COOL SNOW IN HOT SUMMER

Photos & article by Diana


A trek up the mountain follows the cable car ride

In late March I flew from Kunming and arrived at Lijiang 40 minutes later. The best place to stay in Lijiang is its ancient town, where the buildings exude an air of classic sanctity and tiny bridges astride running rivers. I checked into a hotel housed in an elegant bungalow. It was clean and elaborately furnished and each bed had an electric blanket for the cold night. The room rate of 30 yuan was more than worth it.

Having settled in, we walked around the ancient town. The following day we toured the Yulong Snow Mountain, which is situated at the low altitude but is perpetually clad in snow. We also visited Yunshanping (Dragon Spruce Terrace) by the mountain. Located 3,240 metres above sea level, the terrace is actually a gigantic lawn tucked into a forest of dragon spruce. In spring and summer the rich verdure of the lawn gleams nicely against the snowy mountain nearby and the azure sky above.

It took about one hour to go from the ancient town to Dragon Spruce Terrace. The scenery along the way smacks of the primitive age. At the foot of Snowy Mountain visitors may rent a yak or horse to pose for pictures. The Yulong Snow Mountain Scenic Resort lies beyond the terrace. After we bought tickets at 40 yuan each, we drove to the scenic resort's headquarters, where we rented an overcoat for 10 yuan (with a deposit of 100 yuan). For 40 yuan, a cable car hoisted us to Dragon Spruce Terrace in 15 minutes, where we walked through a spruce forest for about 15 minutes and found ourselves on a large piece of grassland. The local Naxi people were singing and dancing, and visitors were welcome to join in. Finding the temptation of the scenery irresistible, I rented three different costumes (five yuan each) and, dressing myself up like the local ethnic people, had a number of pictures taken.

At the summit of the Yulong Snow Mountain, 4,800 metres above sea level

At the mountain, I again rented an overcoat, for 15 yuan, and bought a cable car ticket for 100 yuan, plus a 10-yuan ticket for the local shuttle bus to the cable car station. By the time I arrived at the station I realised the altitude was already 3,356 metres above sea level, and I had started to feel the altitude sickness.

The cable car here, inaugurated only a few months ago, is perhaps the highest of its kind in terms of altitude. It ran smoothly with the exception of a 10-minute stoppage midway, caused by the passage of some lumber trucks.

Twenty-five minutes later I arrived at 4,506 metres up the mountain. As I proceeded slowly, I could feel the drag on my feet. My heart beat violently, and I was running short of breath. It took me half an hour to cover a short distance. All the time I saw people retreating in utter exhaustion, their faces ashen pale. Finally I reached the top at 4,800 metres.

Translated by Ling Yuan

Tips for the Traveller

Transport: Kunming to Lijiang: Flight: 40 minutes, 420 yuan; Air-conditioned express bus: 10 hours, 155.5 yuan.
Ancient Town-Dragon Spruce Terrace: Bus No. 7 at 8:00, 8:30, 10:20, 11:00, 13:30, 14:30.
Dragon Spruce Terrace-Ancient Town: 9:10, 9:50, 11:30, 12:10, 15:50.

Lodging: Sifang Inn, on a lane by Square Street in the ancient town: 60 yuan for a single room, 30 yuan per bed in a double room, both with shared bathroom.
Gelan Hotel, opposite the ancient town entrance: about US$60 for a luxury double room. Service is good, and the breakfast buffet is first-class.

Food: There are numerous restaurants and eateries in the ancient town of Lijiang. Local delicacies include glutinous rice cakes, meat sausages and ham. Patrons are welcome to choose dishes directly in the kitchen. There are eateries at the snowy mountain cable car station; it is best to eat before you start climbing.

Caution: Beware of the startling difference between day and night temperatures and the high altitude. Don't forget your warm clothing and sunscreen.

A TRIUMPHANT PASS THROUGH TANGGULA MOUNTAIN

Photos & article by Wu Wenju

Our triumphant arrival at the Potala Palace, Lhasa

While in Golmud in Qinghai Province, we heard about the bad weather conditions at Wudao Ridge, Togton River and Tanggula Mountain. Tanggula Mountain Pass at the border between Qinghai and Tibet, with its rarefied air, is in particular regarded as no-man's land. Our friends suggested we wait until next summer and go from a different route to Lhasa, which meant to follow the Sichuan-Tibet Highway. Though obviously a good idea, it would mean detours and upset our plan to visit Sichuan, Yunnan, Hainan and Hong Kong before arriving in Macau to witness its return to the motherland. We carefully considered our plan and decided to cross Tanggula Mountain in winter.

Officers of the Golmud Military Depot, concerned about our safety, requested soldiers who stationed along our route to provide lodging, food and logistic aid. On December 14, 1998, together with my companion Liu Yubao, I bid farewell to Golmud, the key access point into Tibet.

Compared with the 50-kilometre journey in Xinjiang, where we often had to push our bicycles, the Qinghai-Tibet Highway conditions were wonderful. In just five days, we cycled 560 kilometres, past Budong Spring, Wudao Ridge, and Yanshi Terrace to reach the Wenquan Military Depot, which was about 50 kilometres from Tanggula Mountain Pass.

Despite its height of 5,231 metres, the mountain pass has a rather smooth road that is worlds apart from the Tashidaban in the Altun Mountain between Gansu and Qinghai. Thus, I felt this pass was like a tamed lion. Tears came to my eyes as I finally stood by the stone landmark of the pass. Thoughts of some magic force protecting us flooded my mind. Perhaps it was the same force that had tamed the once capricious Tanggula Mountain Pass. We burned paper sacrifices and lit cigarettes in gratitude to this invisible force.

We took pictures of each other, but they came out blank because our compact cameras did not work in temperatures at -10 °C.

The 4,880-metre-high Sengeligong Mountain stands between Amdo and Nagqu. With steep slopes and precarious footpaths, Sengeligong somewhat resembles Changbai Mountain in the Northeast and Hengshan Mountain in Shanxi. When we finally made it to the summit after a four-hour toil, I was scared looking all the way down, where cars crawled by like ants. Going down, I gripped my brakes tightly fearing my poor eyesight would fail me.

On the night of December 18, 1998, when we cycled into Nagqu feeling totally exhausted, I realised something was terribly wrong. I was breathing hard and had a runny nose. Experience told me it was both altitude sickness and a bad cold. Colds never scared me before; for decades I had coped by simply drinking plenty of water to flush them out, always recovering in a day or two. This time around was different. In the guesthouse, my pulse increased conspicuously, and I was running a fever. Liu had made the room warm and cosy by burning the dried yak dung, yet I was still trembling with cold. After taking some "instant" cold pills a fellow Shanghai native had given me, I sat by the stove and drank cup after cup of boiled water. By 5 a.m. the next day I began to feel better.

However, when the officials of the prefecture government and the local disabled people's association learned of my condition, they forced me to have an intravenous drip. They told me that in Nagqu, 4,500 metres above sea level, a cold is regarded with horror, for it could easily develop into emphysema, which is extremely difficult to cure.

Past Nagqu, we soon entered Lhasa, and arrived at the Potala Palace. This magnificent building had been tugging at my heartstrings for several decades. On December 24, 1998, we were interviewed by the local press in the distinctly Tibetan-style meeting hall of the Tibet Tower. Gazing at the pilgrims from afar prostrating themselves every step of their journey to the Potala Palace, I seemed to be back in ancient times, but then the commercial jungle in the square opposite reminded me of the new world today.

Translated by Ling Yuan

With a Tibetan family in Nagqu along the Qinghai-Tibet Highway

MY IMPRESSION OF THE BASHANG GRASSLAND

Photos & article by Shen Haiqing

A yurt inn in the holiday village on the Bashang Grassland

Recently I joined a weekend two-day tour organised by a travel service to visit the Bashang Grassland. We set off from Beijing at 6:30 a.m. on a comfortable air-conditioned bus. After running north for 167 kilometres, we passed a mountain peak at the border between Beijing and Fengning County in Hebei Province. Down the mountain, and after another 28 kilometres, we arrived at Dage Town, the seat of Fengning County, then turned westward for 86 kilometres and climbed up the Bashang Grassland at 1,800 metres above sea level. It took a total of seven hours to reach the Holiday Village.

The Bashang Grassland, situated at the southern edge of the Inner Mongolia Plateau, has small undulating hills and few woods. The weather there is nice and cool. The grassland also has horse-riding, horse-drawn carriages, motorised gliding and parasailing activities for a fee. Gliding, for example, is 120 yuan per 10 minutes, a rather expensive pastime.

Horse riding, on the other hand, is an activity everyone can enjoy. The horses are well managed. Each horse has a number and safety insurance is provided. Once on horseback, you are free to display your horsemanship on the grassland, but there is no fear of getting lost as "an old horse knows the way". Generally, two hours is enough for an average rider.

In the evening when wind rises, it is rather cold on the grassland. Dinner is usually held by a bonfire. It usually includes roast beef, roast whole lamb, fried steamed bread and fried rice. The atmosphere is very warm, but the style of eating remains rather primitive. A big bottle of Coca Cola costs 12 yuan and a small can, six yuan, rather outrageous prices. A bonfire costs over 400 yuan, so other than our tourist group, there was no bonfire on the grassland that night when we were there.

[illegible] enjoy the grassland on horseback.

Accommodation in a yurt is the real swindle of the place, with five people sleeping on one wide bed, each charged 60 yuan. The yurt I stayed in that night was "traditional" — its door could not shut tight. Fortunately, there was no wind that night, so with a star-studded sky overhead, I slipped into sleep when silence reigned supreme.

Our programme after breakfast the next day was the same as the day before, and we started our return to Beijing by bus after lunch. We had four meals on the grassland, but mostly they were peanuts and potatoes. The principal foods were sufficient, but vegetable dishes were lacking. As visitors in our group were mostly from Beijing, we simply accepted these politely.

I feel that the travelling expenses on the Bashang Grassland are too high. If a family of three (a child is charged half-price) joins a tour group staying in a standard room and riding horses for two hours, the total cost is 1,100 yuan. Few families on normal wages can afford such an expensive weekend.

However, it is very convenient for those who want to tour the Bashang Grassland independently. You can take a long distance bus from Dongzhimen Long-distance Bus Station in Beijing to Fengning county town, then change to a bus for Bashang. The Olympic Holiday Village is the best location on the grassland. The area has many rises and falls, with forests and pasturelands lying closely together. It is very bright and colourful, and wonderful for photos, especially in spring and autumn. If going by car, you can stop at scenic spots like Yougu Shentan, Yunmeng Mountain and Red-Snail Temple on the way.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

Moonshine and Sunshine in Caoxi Temple

Photos & article by Shen Haiqing

The sundial is an ancient instrument which marks time and the 24 divisions of the solar year.

There has long been a strong relationship between the Caoxi Temple in Anning, Yunnan Province, and the place called Caoxi in Shaozhou, Guangdong Province. Tradition says that when the Sixth Patriarch of the Chan Sect of Buddhism, Monk Hui Neng, was disseminating Buddhism in Shaozhou, Guangdong, during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), he sent one of his disciples to spread the doctrine of enlightenment in Yunnan. Once the disciple arrived in Anning, he found the waters and mountains were very beautiful, with a topography very similar to that of Caoxi in Guangdong. The Chan Buddhism eventually spread around the region of Kunming. During the later years of the Song Dynasty (960-1279), a big temple was built in Anning. The Buddhists of Anning worshipped the patriarch Hui Neng and had great admiration for Caoxi in Guangdong, so they named their temple Caoxi.

The main hall of Caoxi Temple is a simple and unsophisticated ancient building, but its design reflects the architect's rich astronomical knowledge. Its intriguing "Moonshine" design has led to an interesting myth and made the temple even more famed.

The hall faces east and has a round hole of 41 centimetres in diameter at the centre of its front eaves. Local folks believe that every 60 years during the Mid-Autumn Festival (the 15th day of the eighth lunar month), the moonlight would go through the hole and rest on the forehead of the statue of Amitabha in the hall. As the moon rises, the moonbeam would move slowly downward and disappear into the navel of the Buddha. This marvellous phenomenon, known as "The Precious Moon from Heaven" or "Caoxi Moonshine", reflects the astronomical achievements made in China in the 13th century. It also shows how this knowledge was applied to architecture and sculpture.

Caoxi Moonshine seems to be a rare phenomenon that few have viewed. Moreover, even when the opportunity arrives, the weather conditions may prevent a viewing. In the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1984, purported to be the right year to see it, many people came to the temple to feast their eyes on the marvellous phenomenon. But unfortunately, it began to drizzle at dusk, and the opportunity was lost.

According to Zhang Bairong, director of the Yunnan Astronomical Observatory, the rare phenomenon of Caoxi Moonshine truly exists, but its cycle is not the Mid-Autumn Festival every 60 years. It occurs more often when the moon rises from the east, with a declination between 0 to 4 degrees. This happens several times a year. But between the first to 15th days of every lunar month, the sun has not set when the moon rises; the moonlight is therefore too weak to be seen when it reaches the statue of Amitabha. From the 25th to 30th days of every lunar month, the moon wanes, and again its light is too weak to shine on the statue. So the Caoxi Moonshine phenomenon occurs only between the 15th and 25th days of each lunar month. Monk Guang Liang, who lived in Caoxi Temple for years, said that he witnessed the Caoxi Moonshine phenomenon several times a year when he sat in the courtyard late at night after supper.

Although the Caoxi Moonshine phenomenon is elusive, the Caoxi Sunshine phenomenon is more easily seen. A regular pilgrim declared he had witnessed the sun shining on the Amitabha's chest several times a year. The Caoxi Sunshine phenomenon occurs on several successive mornings around the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes every year. It happens 30 to 50 minutes after the sun rises. As the sunlight pierces the round hole, the gilded Buddha glistens with the myriad golden rays, creating a magnificent spectacle.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

The three wooden Buddhist statues enshrined in the main hall of Caoxi Temple are carved with superb craftsmanship. They are rare Song-dynasty cultural relics existing in China today.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE NO. 232

• Beijing: Today and the Past

Visit the Emperor's Residence: During the reigns of Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong, the Qing Dynasty reached its heyday. Visiting the Forbidden City, the former residence of these important Qing-dynasty emperors, may sound irresistible to you: Where did the ceremony of the emperors' enthronement take place? What did the emperors' bedrooms look like? Where was their study located? ... You will find the answers from this amusing tour.

The New Face of the Capital: While striving to retain the former glory of its historical and cultural legacy, Beijing is ever changing with such amazing speed that you may not recognise it if you leave the city for just two to three years. Restoration works for preserving the old look of the city have taken place in Shichahai, the Grand Canal, the surroundings of the Forbidden City.... For those looking for novelties, there are bars, Internet cafes, books cafes, and even a ceramics cafe. You can have a taste of the cultural craze of today's Beijingers.

A Hutong Tour on a Pedicab: Touring the hutongs, the back alleys of the old city, has long become a must for travellers to Beijing. Yet you may want to consult the local guides for some tips to brighten up your tour: hutongs in the south and north are occupied by the poor, while those in the east and the west by the rich; affluent families living in these quadrangles allocate the rooms according to certain rules...

A Day in Tian'anmen Square: The day has not yet dawned, yet thousands of people have already assembled quietly in Tian'anmen Square. What are they expecting? In daytime, a flock of birds is hovering over the spacious square. What kind of bird is it? In the twilight, more and more Beijingers, men and women, old and young, from far and near, come to gather in the square....

Treasure Hunt: Going shopping in Beijing is undoubtedly an extraordinary experience. Curios, second-hand goods, works of art, folk handicrafts... You can find whatever you like by following our reporter.

Other recommendations: Touring the Great Wall at night; tasting Peking duck prepared in two different ways; shopping in Dashilar where all the prestigious old shops are found; sipping tea in a teahouse....

• Former Palaces in Shenyang

Before the Manchus occupied Beijing, the two founders of the Qing Dynasty had established their palaces in Shenyang. This was where Shunzhi, the first emperor of the Qing Dynasty, was enthroned.

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Guiyang	Holiday Inn Guiyang	*****	1 Guikai Rd.	550004	(851) 6771888	(851) 6771688
	Guizhou Park Hotel	***	66 Beijing Rd.	550004	(851) 6823888	(851) 6824397
	Guiyang Plaza Hotel	***	2 Yan'an Rd. E.	550001	(851) 6825888	(851) 6822994
	Baicheng Hotel	pending	246 Zhonghua Rd. S.	550001	(851) 5866888	(851) 5824985
	Jinqiao Hotel	**	34 Ruijin Rd. C.	550002	(851) 5829953	(851) 5825317
	Qiaoyi Hotel	**	1 Nanchang Rd.	550002	(851) 5509188	(851) 5500170
	Yunyan Hotel	**	68 Beijing Rd.	550001	(851) 6803325	(851) 6823324
	Hualian Hotel	**	137 Zhonghua Rd. C.	550001	(851) 5810999	(851) 5820157
	Tongda Hotel	**	102 Zunyi Rd.	550002	(851) 5790560	(851) 5790235
	Sheng'an Hotel	**	180 Zhongshan Rd. E.	550002	(851) 5822898	(851) 5822898 -8108
	Hebin Hotel	**	118 Ruijin Rd. S.	550002	(851) 5812987	(851) 5812988
	Keyuan Hotel	**	Huoju Tower, Xintian Blvd.	550002	(851) 6846726	(851) 6846448
	Xinlian Tower	**	227 Outer Huancheng Rd. E.	550001	(851) 6765555	(851) 6766542
	Tenglong Hotel	**	88 Yan'an Rd. C.	550001	(851) 5826088	(851) 5827538
	Hongyang Hotel	**	P. O. Box 150, Huaxi District	550025	(851) 3853306	(851) 3853311
	Zilin Hotel	**	110 Yan'an Rd. C.	550001	(851) 5863000	(851) 5860674
Anshun	Yan'an Hotel	***	Beside Guihuang Highway	561000	(853) 3228988	(853) 3320247
	Hongshan Hotel	**	42 Honghu Rd. E.	561000	(853) 3253756	
	Minzu Hotel	**	67 Tashan Rd. E.	561000	(853) 3222500	(853) 3222621
	Xixiushan Hotel	**	63 Nanhua Rd.	561000	(853) 3223900	(853) 3223900
Zhenning	Huangguoshu Hotel	**	Management Office, Huangguoshu Scenic Area	561208	(853) 3592110	(853) 3592111
Zunyi	Zunyi Hotel	**	3 Shilong Rd.	563000	(852) 8223868	(852) 8221479
	Xiangshan Hotel	**	103 Zhongshan Rd.	563000	(852) 8224991	(852) 8827014
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Kaili	Kaili Hotel	**	3 Guangchang Rd.	556000	(855) 8234660	(855) 8221658
	Yingpanpo Hotel	**	53 Yingpanpo Rd. E.	556000	(855) 8234600	(855) 8234600
Lupanshui	Zhongshan Hotel	**	52 Zhongshan Rd. W.	553001	(858) 8222597	(858) 8225639
Xingyi	Panjiang Hotel	**	4 Panjiang Rd. W.	562400	(859) 3223456	(859) 3222670
Tongren	Jinjiang Hotel	**	8 Jinjiang Rd. S.	553400	(856) 5222341	

Flights to and from **Guiyang**

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Chengdu — Guiyang	3	08:30	09:20	SZ4321
	7	08:30	09:30	SZ4377
	7	09:20	10:20	SZ4439
	1 2 3 4 5 6	09:20	10:20	SZ4439
	2 4 6	10:05	11:00	SZ4439
	2 6	12:50	13:50	CZ8742
	1	12:50	13:50	CZ8742
	6	12:55	13:55	SZ4321
	4 7	13:45	14:50	WH2428
	4	13:50	14:50	SZ4377
	1 5	14:10	15:10	SZ4441
Guiyang — Chengdu	2 6	08:30	09:30	SZ4442
	1	11:10	12:10	CZ8741
	2 6	11:10	12:10	CZ8741
	4 7	11:35	12:45	WH2427
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	16:10	17:00	SZ4440
	7	18:10	19:10	SZ4378
	4	19:05	20:05	SZ4378
	6	19:20	20:20	SZ4322
	3	20:40	21:45	SZ4322
Chongqing — Guiyang	2 4	10:40	11:40	G4 342
	1 3 5 7	10:40	11:40	G4 444
	2 4	18:10	19:10	G4 442
Guiyang — Chongqing	2 4	09:00	10:00	G4 441
	1 3 5 7	09:00	10:00	G4 443
	2 4	16:30	17:30	G4 343
Dalian — Guiyang	5	08:25	12:35	CJ6431
Guiyang — Dalian	5	13:20	17:10	CJ6432
Guangzhou — Guiyang	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	10:40	12:20	CZ3411
	2 5 7	11:40	13:10	3Q4348
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	14:15	15:30	SZ4362
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	16:55	18:25	CZ3510
	2 4 7	19:55	21:10	SZ4332
	1 3 5 6	21:00	22:15	SZ4332
Guiyang — Guangzhou	1 3 5 6	07:45	08:50	SZ4331
	2 4 7	08:00	09:00	SZ4331
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	08:30	10:00	CZ3509
	2 5 7	09:20	10:50	3Q4347
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12:30	13:30	SZ4361
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	13:00	14:30	CZ3412
Guilin — Guiyang	3 7	16:16	17:25	G4 340
	2 5	19:25	20:10	CZ8638
Guiyang — Guilin	3 7	10:20	11:20	G4 339
	2 5	14:50	15:40	CZ8637
Hangzhou — Guiyang	7	08:05	10:05	F65935
	2 5	08:20	10:20	F65935
Guiyang — Hangzhou	2 5	14:00	15:50	F65936
	7	14:00	15:50	F65936
Nanjing — Guiyang	3 7	08:15	11:50	WH2819
	1 5	08:30	12:10	WH2863
	2 3 6	14:30	17:40	MU5439
Guiyang — Nanjing	3 7	12:30	15:30	WH2820
	1 5	12:50	16:20	WH2864
	2 3 6	18:20	21:35	MU5440
Zhengzhou — Guiyang	3 5	08:15	10:10	Z2 373
	5	10:45	12:35	CJ6431
Guiyang — Zhengzhou	5	13:20	14:55	CJ6432
	3 5	13:50	15:45	Z2 374

** For reference only.*

Flights to and from **Xiamen**

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Hong Kong — Xiamen	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12:20	13:20	CZ 382
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	13:00	14:10	CZ 384
Xiamen — Hong Kong	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	10:10	11:20	CZ 381
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	15:10	16:20	CZ 383
Kunming — Xiamen	3 6 7	08:05	10:20	3Q4815
	2 5	09:45	12:45	SZ4871
	1 4	11:05	13:25	MF8406
	6	15:05	18:10	SZ4871
Xiamen — Kunming	1 4	08:05	10:25	MF8405
	6	10:45	13:55	SZ4872
	3 6 7	11:05	13:30	3Q4816
	2 5	13:25	16:30	SZ4872
Qingdao — Xiamen	4	07:50	09:45	SC 237
	1 4	08:40	12:05	MU5829
	2 5	10:10	13:25	MF8512
	1 4	10:35	13:55	CJ6957
	2 4 7	10:50	13:55	SZ4853
	4 7	11:20	14:40	MF8526
Xiamen — Qingdao	2 5	07:15	09:30	MF8511
	4 7	07:15	10:40	MF8525
	2 4 7	14:35	17:55	SZ4854
	1 4	14:45	17:50	CJ6958
	4	15:30	16:20	SC 238
	1 4	18:30	21:55	MU58230
Shenzhen — Xiamen	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	08:25	09:20	4G 845
	4	12:40	14:50	SC 238
	3 7	12:55	13:50	MU5894
	1 3 5	13:00	14:00	MF8340
	4	13:45	14:50	MF8332
	2 6 7	13:45	14:50	MF8332
	2	15:50	16:55	CJ6360
	2 3 5 6 7	16:00	17:05	CZ 379
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	17:05	17:55	MF8316
	3 6	21:25	22:20	MF8360
Xiamen — Shenzhen	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	10:00	11:10	4G 846
	4	10:30	11:50	SC 237
	3 7	10:50	12:05	MU5893
	1 3 5	11:15	12:20	MF8339
	1 3 4 6 7	11:55	12:50	CZ 380
	2 6 7	12:15	13:05	MF8331
	4	12:15	13:05	MF8331
	2	13:35	14:50	CJ6359
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	15:20	16:15	MF8315
	3 6	16:35	17:20	MF8359
Wuhan — Xiamen	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	08:00	09:25	CZ3841
	5	08:15	09:35	WU801
	2 4	08:25	09:05	WU801
	6	10:00	11:10	MF8310
	2 5	12:30	14:00	CZ3849
	1 3 6	13:15	14:30	MF8202
Xiamen — Wuhan	1 3 6	07:40	08:55	MF8201
	6	07:55	09:15	MF8309
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	10:05	11:45	CZ3842
	5	10:20	11:40	WU802
	2 4	10:20	12:00	WU802
	2 6	15:00	18:05	Z2 388
	3 6	15:40	17:00	CZ3850

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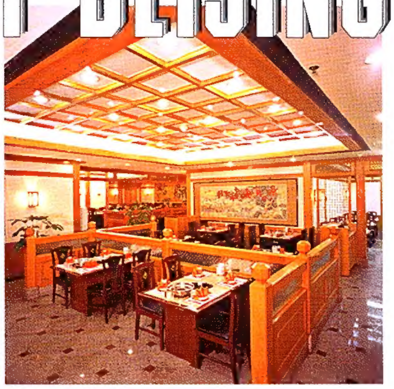

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